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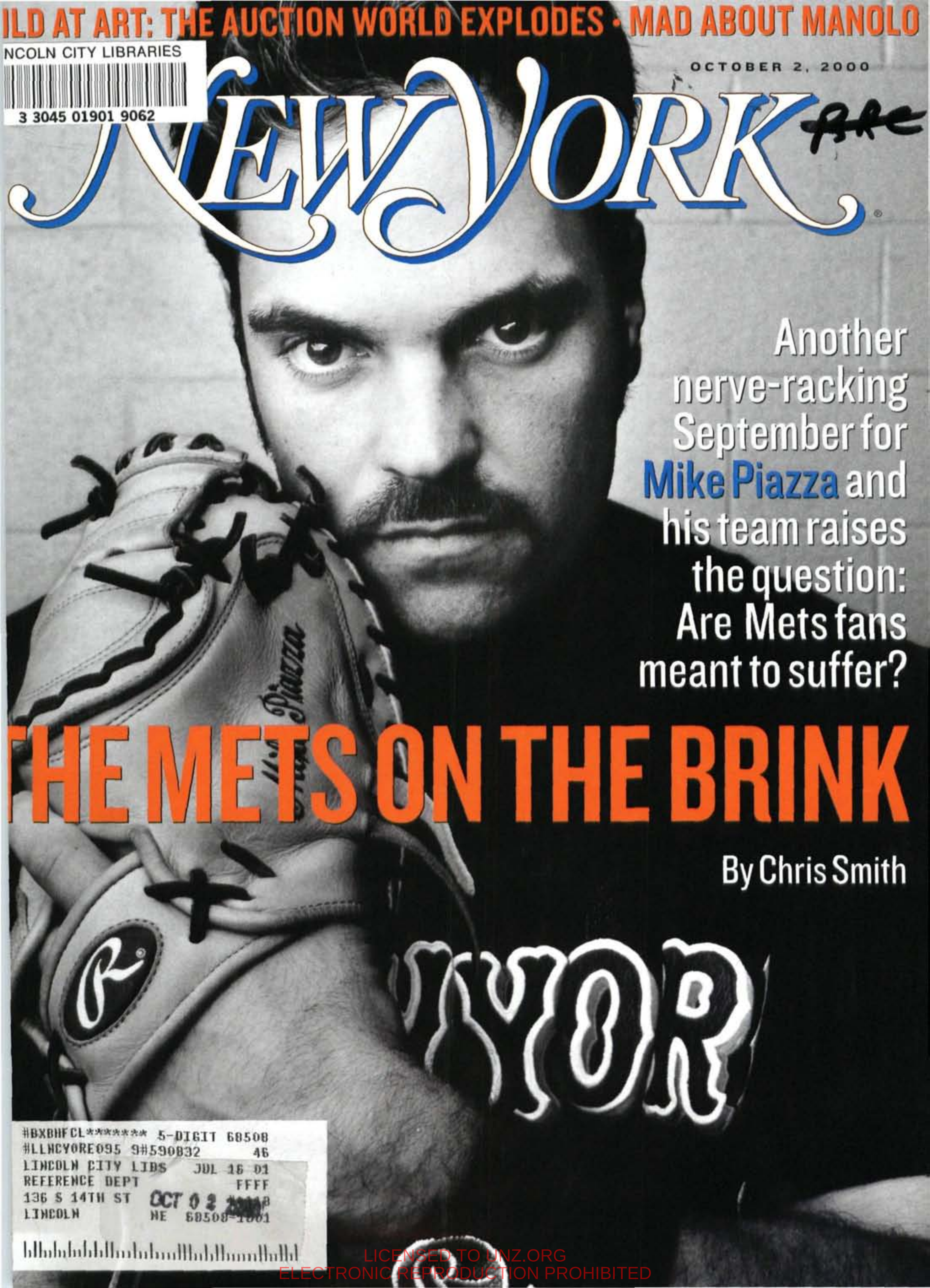

Another nerve-racking September for **Mike Piazza** and his team raises the question: Are Mets fans meant to suffer?

HE METS ON THE BRINK

By Chris Smith

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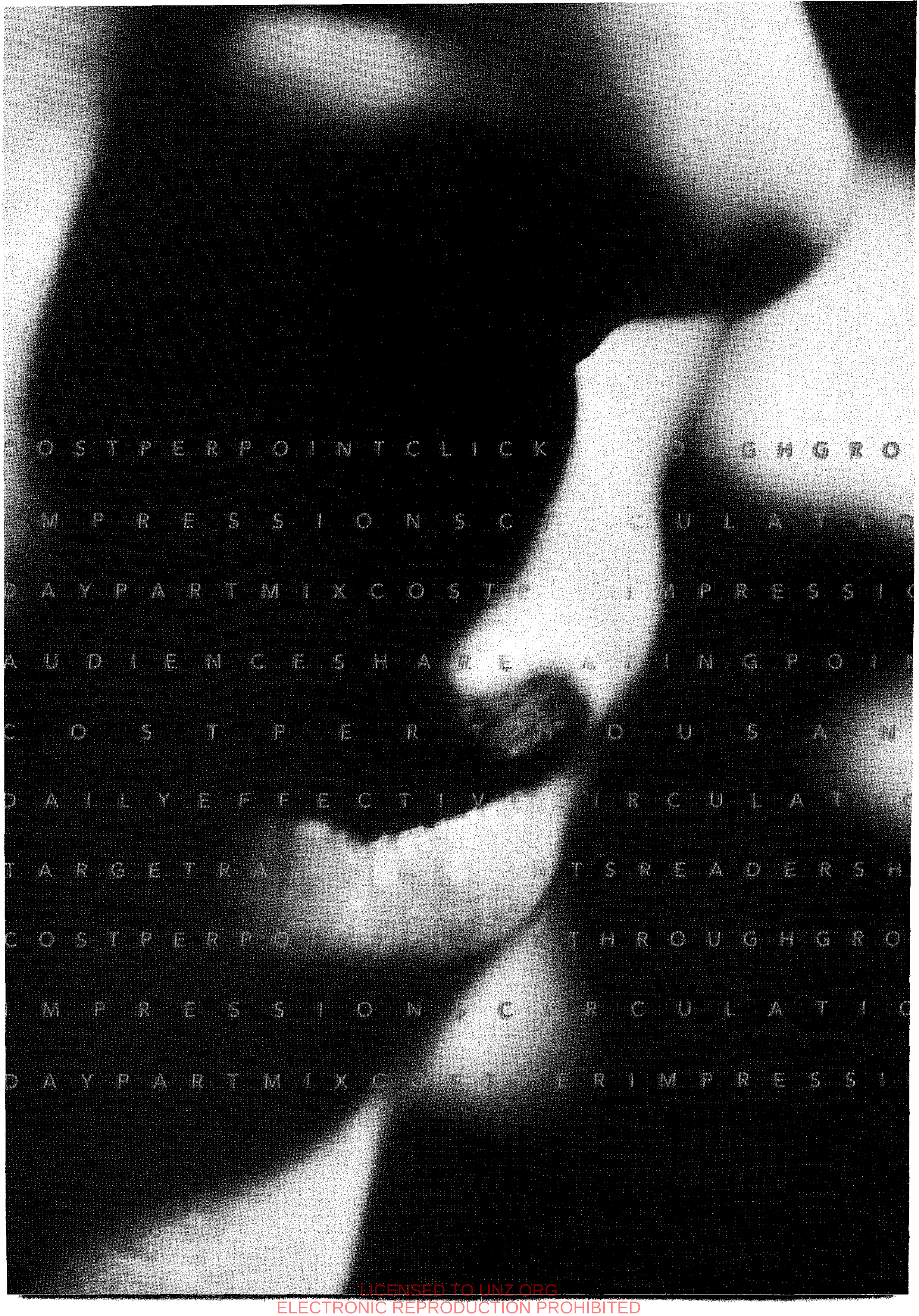
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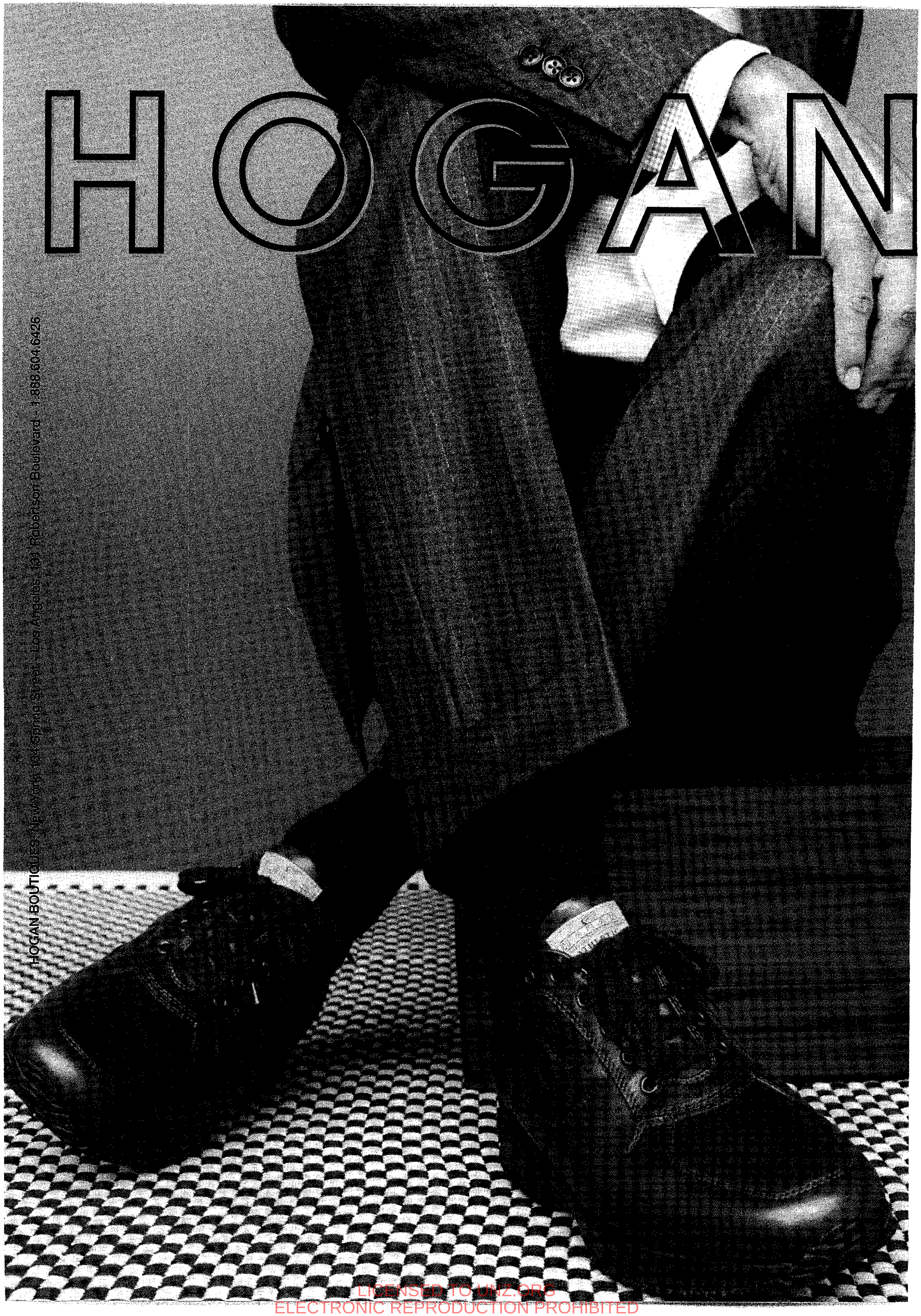
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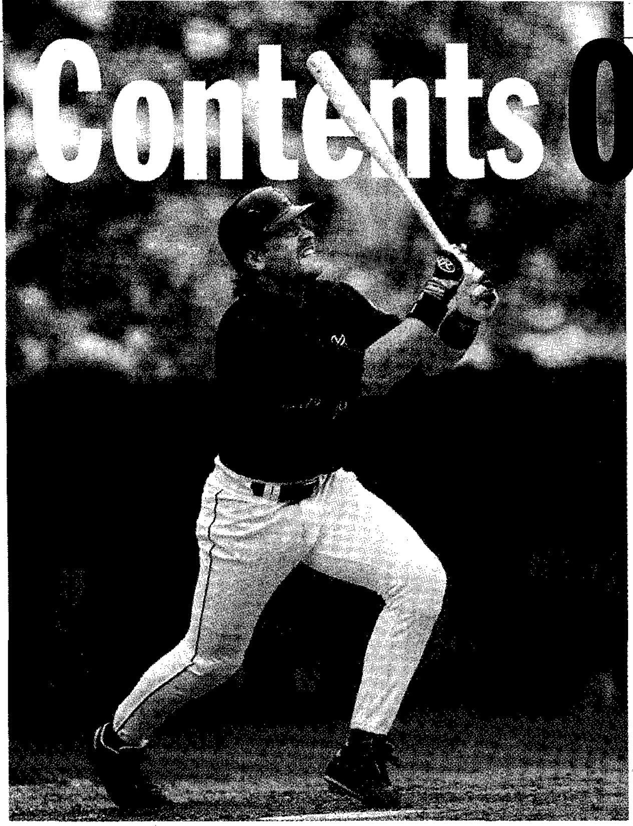
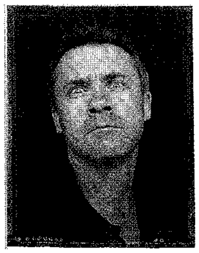


> *"I've been trying to invent a new cliché to replace 'stepping up.' That's the most overused term in sports."*
>
> Mike Piazza, page 30

30 September Rain By Chris Smith

This year's Mets have talent, character, team spirit, personality—everything but a winning record in September. With losing come questions. Mike Piazza wonders who will play Greg Luzinski to his Mike Schmidt. Bobby Valentine wonders whether the "clowns" from the media will cut his team a break. And loyalists wonder if it's possible to keep on loving a team that disappoints. (Ask a Red Sox fan.) A portrait of a team on the brink.

36 Art and Commerce By Christopher Mason



Recent prices brought by Jeff Koons and Damien Hirst prove that an eighties-style art market is upon us. But along with pickled carcasses and porcelain nudes, a new controversy has arisen: Auction houses have begun pumping the reputations (and prices) of contemporary artists—often before the paint on the work is even dry—leaving the galleries that represent them out of the picture altogether.

44 A Time to Heel By Vanessa Grigoriadis

On a rare visit to New York, pump maestro Manolo Blahnik greeted his grateful public. But why, he wondered, did these women keep handing him their shoes? "It's on your foot, eh? I don't want to touch it."

46 Houston, We Have a Musical

By Aaron Latham

Twenty years ago, the country flipped for mechanical bulls and rhinestone cowboys, John Travolta and Debra Winger. Now, as *Urban Cowboy* lopes toward Broadway, Latham recounts his own journey with a modern hero.

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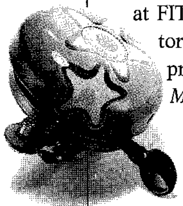

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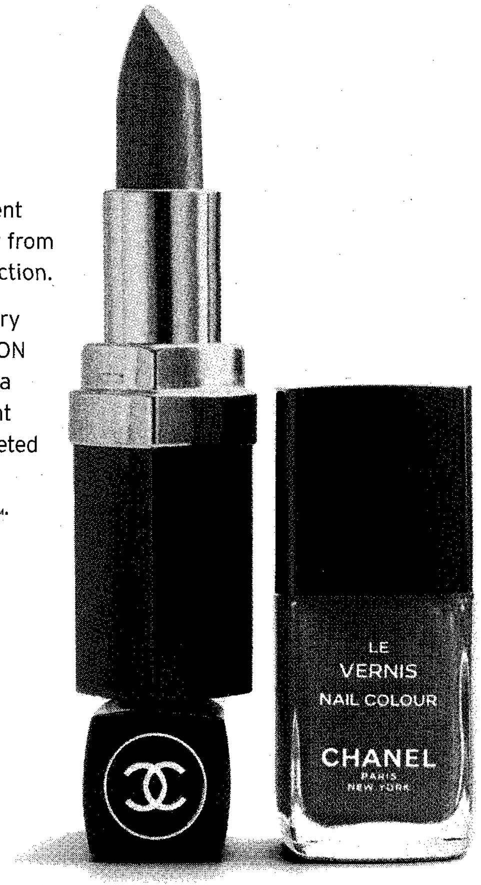

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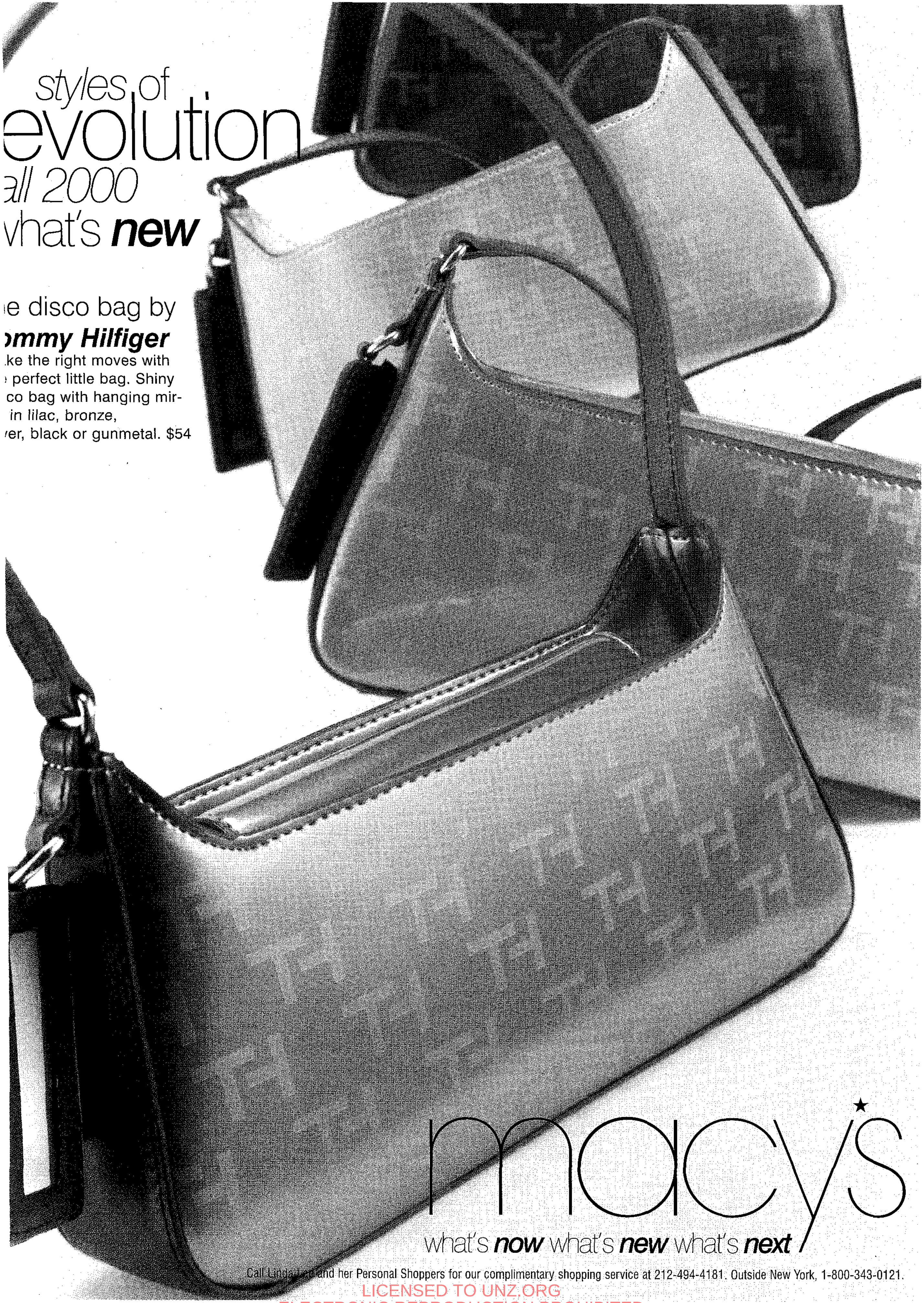

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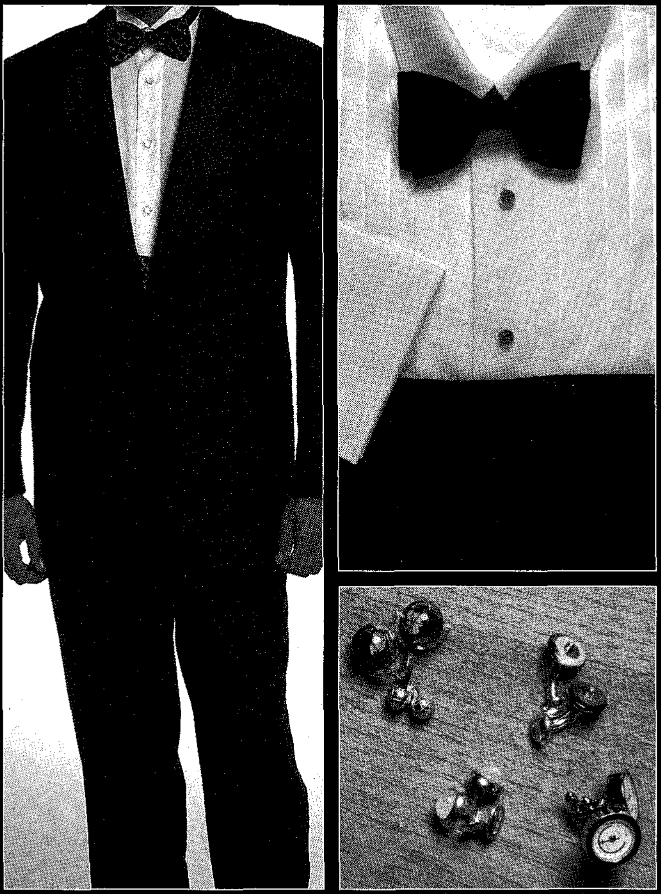

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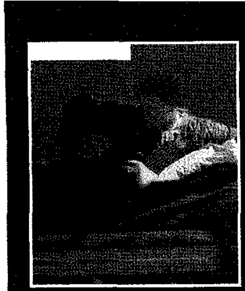

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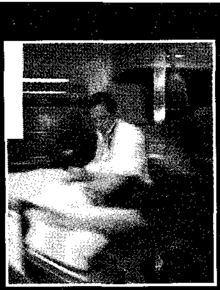

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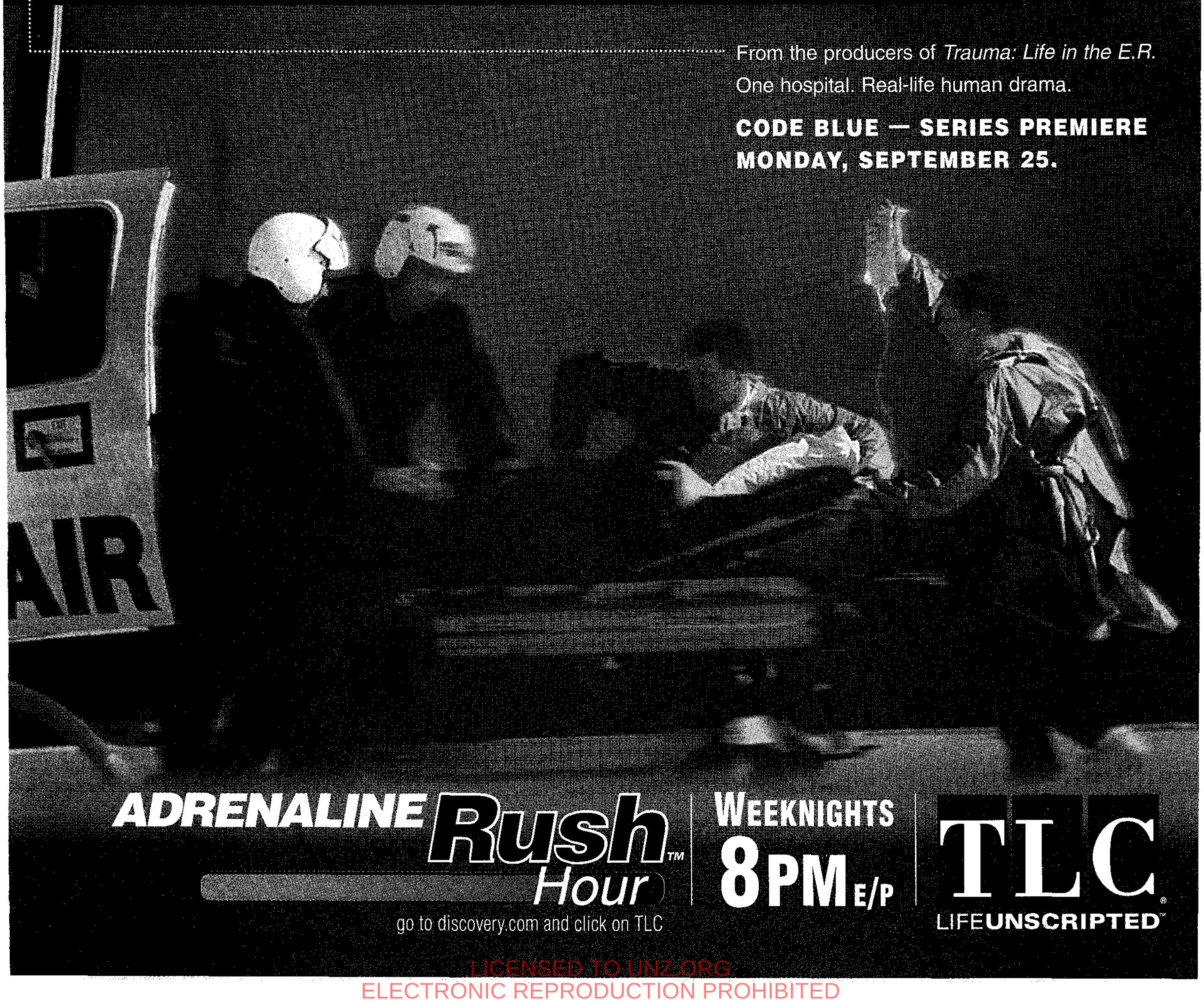

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The Tao of Bill

Friends (and enemies) of Bill Clinton sound off on his impending arrival in New York; making disco history; 'Saturday Night' defended.

AFTER READING "BUBBA TAKES MANhattan" by Jennifer Senior [September 18], I have to agree. In today's New York, Bill Clinton will become its No. 1 citizen: the kahuna of consumption, the king of the cover-up, the uncouth sophisticate, the vicious "liberal," the belching and flatulent energy addict forever nursing his cocktail of equal parts sex and politics, the consummate ugly American. Look around; New York City caters to slobs just like him. Well, New York deserves Bill Clinton and Bill Clinton deserves New York. Good Luck.

Leo E. Grinhauz
HIGHLAND PARK, N.J.

ARE YOU KIDDING ME WITH YOUR SEPTEMber 18 cover? Bill Clinton never has been, and never will be, one of us. Hell, I left Manhattan ten years ago, and even I'm insulted.

Jim Ouimet
NEW HOPE, PA.

ALTHOUGH I HAVE READ AND ENJOYED your magazine for years, I have rarely enjoyed an article more than I enjoyed Jennifer Senior's insight into Bill's future as a New Yorker. Please let her know that at least one person smiled ear to ear all day after reading her contribution.

Jennifer Freed
UPPER MONTCLAIR, N.J.

To Hill and Back

READING MICHAEL TOMASKY'S PIECE REgarding the Clinton-Lazio race ["The City Politic: The N-Word," September 11], I just didn't get it. He catalogues Mrs. Clinton's sins as follows: her carpetbagging, the dislike she arouses, her questionable commitment to New York, and her relationship with Bill—as if we should be losing sleep over any of these matters! We're lucky a smart, D.C.-knowledgeable lady wants to speak up for a state that is, for all intents and purposes, divided in half: the city vs. the rest of the state. Others have moved New York forward and then gone on to greater things. I cannot judge ambition as a failure. And why should her marital relations occupy our minds on Election Day? What teeny-weeny brains we must have!

Ann Weiss-Bingham
WESTFIELD, N.Y.

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Island Paradise

I WILL ALWAYS BE GRATEFUL TO *NEW YORK* Magazine because your 1978 article by Don Sutherland on bargains in Staten Island ["The Stately Homes of . . . Staten Island?," January 16] led to our purchase of an 1891 twelve-room Victorian for $32,000. I love it here in Stapleton, but I was disappointed to find that in more recent coverage of my neighborhood ["Home in Your Range," by Allen Salkin, September 4], you failed to mention Immaculate Conception, the only parochial school in the area. I sent all my children to this gem of a school. It still uses traditional schooling techniques, and the children can read by the first grade.

Alice Jernigan
STATEN ISLAND

Disco Daze

I READ YOUR STORY ON DOWNTOWN FASHion genius Keni Valenti ["Rags to Riches," by Shyama Patel, August 28] with great pleasure, but there was one photo caption that I know had to be an error. Under a shot of a youthful Valenti reclining on a banquette, the caption reads "Valenti at Danceteria, 1977, age 19." As one of the founding promoters, I have to insist that the club did not open until well after 1977. Danceteria was a child of the eighties and never had to compete with Studio 54 when that club was in its 1977 prime. In 1977, the only significant New York discos were Studio 54 and Regine's; Danceteria was part of the second wave that came after these legends had paved the way. Let's keep our disco history accurate!

Baird Jones
MANHATTAN

Feeding a Fever

I AM A FLIGHT ATTENDANT FOR A MAJOR airline who has been a loyal subscriber for years. Your magazine has always provided me with the best ideas on where to eat, where to shop, and, most important, what shows to see during New York layovers. Finding ourselves in New York over the Labor Day holiday and wanting to celebrate laboring through the sky, my crew decided to see the best New York has to offer in entertainment. Luckily, we overlooked *New York*'s spartan listing for *Saturday Night Fever:* "Flared pants!" [Cue Theater listings, September 18] and were lucky enough to get orchestra seats for one of the best shows I have ever seen. Why does no one recognize the brilliance and incredible talent in this show?

Marianne Moore
SATELLITE BEACH, FLA.

Play's the Thing

READING JOHN SIMON'S REVIEW OF *JULIUS Caesar* in the September 4 issue, I took offense at his comment concerning Jeffrey Wright's portrayal of Mark Antony. He wrote: "If a minority actor for Mark Antony was deemed necessary, why not the pop idol Marc Anthony?" While I do have a sense of humor, I think this was in poor taste. The real question is, when is a minority actor *not* deemed appropriate for any theater role? Mr. Simon's comment is insulting, not only to minorities such as myself but also to the entire theater community. Mr. Simon's comment suggests that it would be perfectly appropriate for minorities to be locked out of *all* Shakespearian roles except for Othello. Should that extend to all European-derived theater? Mr. Simon, quit taking the phrase *the Great White Way* so literally.

Thomas J. Harrison
THE BRONX

Correction In the September 18 "Gotham Scene," Jacques Leviant's name was misspelled. Also, for last week's cover photo, the hair and makeup credits should have read: "Hair by Vincent Roppate/Red Door Salon/Saks Fifth Ave; makeup by Kat James/Garren." ■

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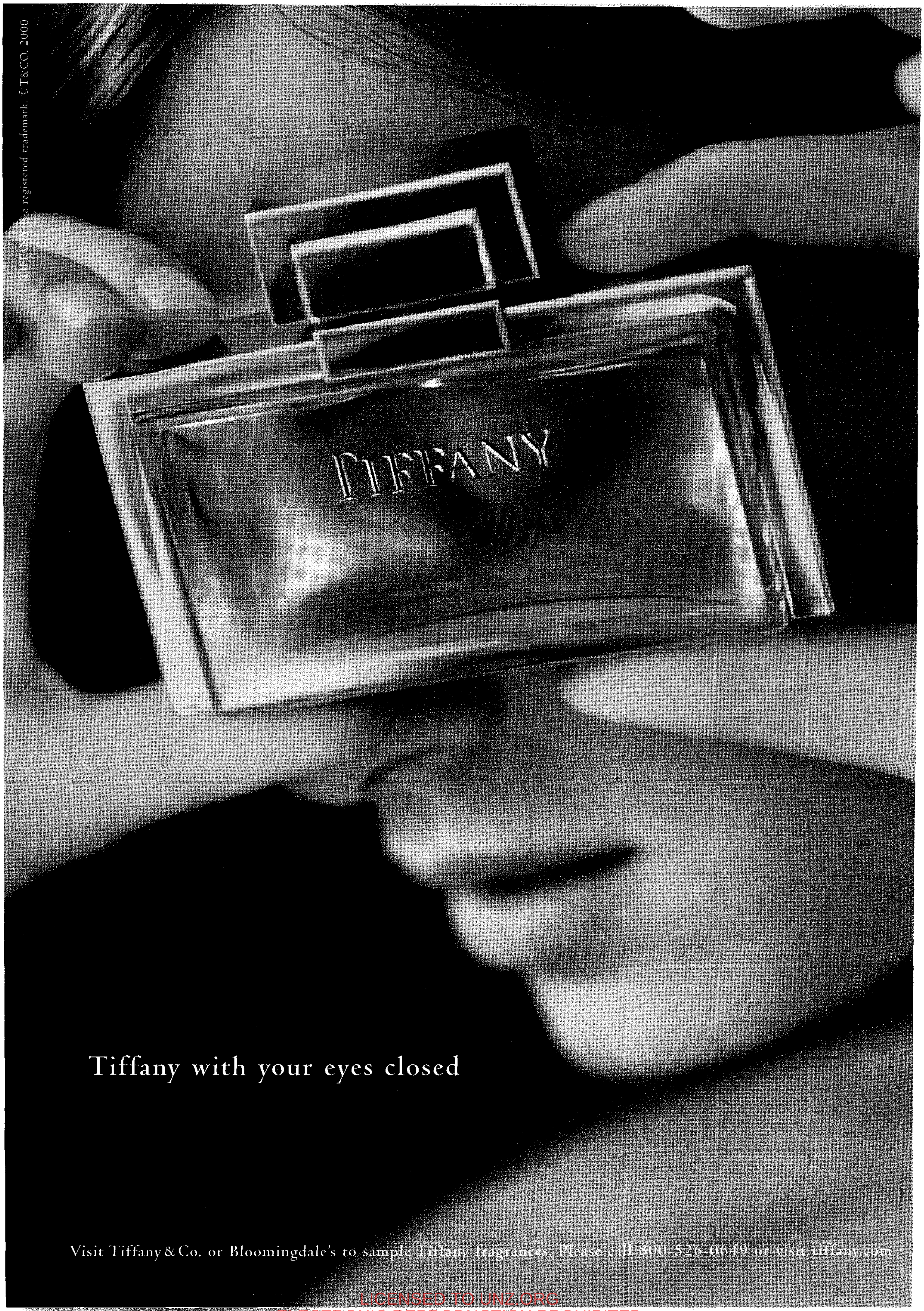
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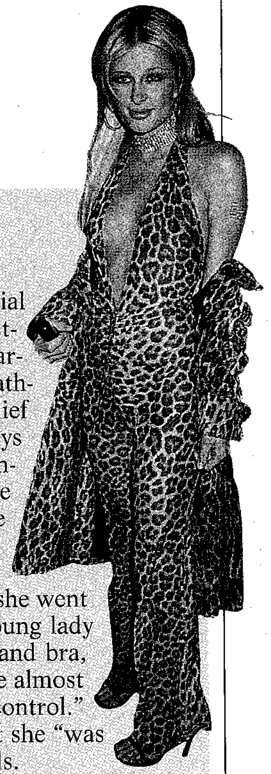
BY BETH LANDMAN KEIL AND IAN SPIEGELMAN

INTELLIGENCER

KURT QUERIES QUEER GOLDIE'S DINNER

Whatever's going on between **Goldie Hawn** and **Kurt Russell**, don't ask Goldie. When the ever-stunning Hawn recently showed up for a G & P Foundation for Cancer Research dinner hosted by her friend **Denise Rich** at Pier 92, the throng of journalists and photographers quickly made her lose her appetite. "There was all this press left over from the Escada show," says a witness, "and as soon as they saw Goldie, they pretty much bombarded her. The photographers went crazy, and people had to shield her from them." The real problem, however, wasn't the shutterbugs but the reporters. According to the source, so many journos inquired about recent reports that Hawn's long relationship with Russell is on the outs that she was "practically in tears" by the time she reached her table. "She was supposed to stay for dinner," the tipster tells us, "but she was so upset that she just said 'Hi' to Denise and left." Hawn's rep did not return calls.

HILTON'S REP IS IN THE TOILET



Junior socialite **Paris Hilton** certainly seems to have a keen grasp of social etiquette. A fashion-world source tells us that at Nautica's recent post-show party at Laparue, the 19-year-old hotel heiress enraged fellow partygoers when she and beau **Edward Furlong** locked themselves up in the bathroom for a cool twenty minutes, leaving hipsters in need of a little relief standing around in anguish. "The line was like fifteen people long," says the source. "Everyone was drinking and the place only has two bathrooms, so the situation became pretty tense." The tipster says that once Hilton and Furlong unbolted the powder-room door, the Park Avenue nymph showed off her Sapphic side, attempting to kiss a slender model on the lips. "She kept getting all up in this one model's face, trying to kiss her," explains the source. "But the model kept dodging Paris until she went away." To get over the rejection, Paris did what any noble-blooded young lady would do: She went to the upstairs balcony, showed off her G-string and bra, and, according to one witness, performed a lap dance for Furlong. "She almost fell off the balcony," says the observer. "That girl was totally out of control." When asked about the evening, a rep for Hilton curiously insisted that she "was only at the party for five minutes." Furlong's manager didn't return calls.

UNHAPPY BUDDHA BARS U.S. OUTPOST

Leave it to the Parisians to find national pride in a trendy bar. When the folks behind the Paris hot spot Buddha Bar got wind that restaurateur **Marc Packer** was slated to open a restaurant with a similar name in New York—Packer was calling his the Tao Buddha Bar—they had their lawyers write a terse letter explaining that they owned the rights to the name Buddha Bar for use in America (not that the name hadn't already been tried, by the now-defunct—and not related—Buddha Bar on Varick Street). "But we had looked into this and knew it wasn't true," Packer tells us. "So we sent them a letter asking for the trademark number and a location for their U.S. restaurant. They never gave us a straight answer." However, when his nosherie opens this fall, the name *will* be changed, to Tao Asian Bistro. Was it the Gallic pressure? "No way," snips Packer. "We made the decision independently, *not* because of them." The Parisians didn't return our calls. And in other nightlife news, **Jeff Gossett**, the man who gave New York Moomba, is opening a branch of the lounge in Los Angeles. The sibling eatery is set to open in February.

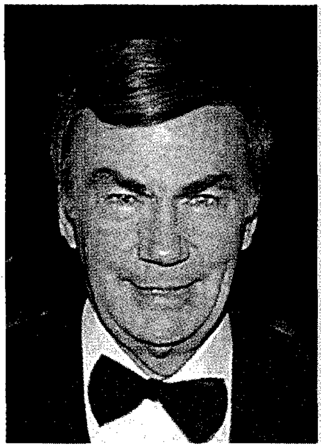
DAMIEN HIRST GOES DOWN FACE-FIRST

Attention-getting artist **Damien Hirst** is looking just a little less pretty these days. Before his show at Chelsea's Gagosian Gallery, the bad-boy Brit wounded his face during some horseplay with a few of his buddies. According to a source close to Hirst, he booked the penthouse suite at the Soho Grand as well as several rooms at the Chelsea Hotel to accommodate his pals from across the pond, including members of London's bawdy Groucho Club, among them rubber-faced actor **Rowan Atkinson**. Originally, we'd heard that Hirst fell over after too much of a good time at a barbecue he held at the Grand, but his publicist, **Nadine Johnson**, amusedly set us straight. The art star—nicknamed Damien Thirst by his crew—scored his scars not at the barbecue but simply while he was "walking down the street." Actually, he wasn't walking, but riding on a friend's back. Everything was going just swimmingly until, it was explained via e-mail, "the friend tripped over." We're just glad to know he wasn't up to anything *silly*.

GANDEE PUTS *TALK* STAFF ON HOT SEAT

Not content with simply helping redesign the magazine's feature well, *Talk* editor **Charles Gandee** is now redesigning the office space. The staff of the monthly recently moved to new quarters in Chelsea, where the enterprising editor was pressed into service as a decorator. The stylish ex–*Vogue* editor's first move was to ban the staff's

Photographs: top, Henry McGee/Globe Photos; bottom, Robin Platzer/Twin Images.



NO WELCOME MATT FOR DONALDSON

When it comes to the topic of **Matt Drudge**, ABC's **Sam Donaldson** is right in line with his mainstream news brethren. "To the best of my knowledge, Matt's never broken any story of any consequence at all," the veteran anchor told us at the Independent Feature Project's Tenth Annual Gotham Award show last week. Drudge had grabbed the spotlight yet again by releasing information about a New York *Times* story before the paper had seen fit to print it, but Donaldson remained unimpressed: "It's a *unique* way to say you're in journalism," said Donaldson. Also in attendance was *Girlfight* star **Michelle Rodriguez**, picking up the Breakthrough Actor Award. Before landing the career-making role in an open call, she told us, "I'd never gone on an audition in my life. I never wanted to put myself in someone else's hands because they can really mess up your ego." And how has the breakthrough role affected the 22-year-old Jersey girl's ego? "It showed me that I don't have one," she said. "I'm just a dead person. I'm not even in my body. None of this is me." We know just how she feels.

old desk chairs and replace them with wooden ones imported from the Bank of England. According to distressed staff members, in addition to being quite ugly, the new chairs are rock-hard and ergonomically incorrect. One insider reports that the staff is so put out they're circulating a petition demanding that Gandee—whose *own* designer throne swivels, reclines, and is made of plush leather—be forced to spend a week on one of the torturous seats. Says the source, "Most people have had to augment their chairs with cushions to make them at all bearable." Gandee defends the chairs as "classic" and claims that specially imported pads are on the way.

EX-COMMUNICATIONS MAJOR FROM BYU

Where do you go when the Church of Latter Day Saints is mad at you? Cyberspace, of course. At least, this was the case for **Julie Stoffer**, the bubbly twentysomething star of the most recent incarnation of MTV's *The Real World*. While viewers were charmed by Stoffer, the powers-that-be at Brigham Young University didn't relish seeing their student—who's supposed to be a devout Mormon—rooming with boys at the *Real World* house in New Orleans, so they soundly booted her out of school. Now she's signed on as spokeswoman for Soulgear.com, an extreme-sports Website co-founded by Stoffer's former TV housemate **Jamie Murray**. Stoffer, who was a business-management major until BYU requested her absence, will be handling the site's new nonprofit initiative, which is intended to raise funds for environmental-preservation and youth-development programs. Maybe they can give a little something to **Jesse Camp**.

PRINCE IS PEEVED; DUCASSE HAS A COW

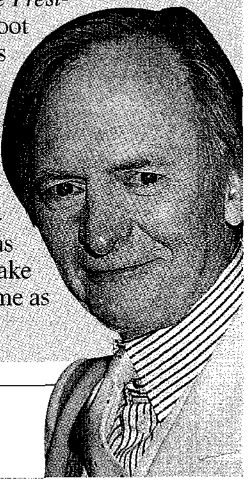
DAVIS'S PRINCELY REP: **Prince** will have to find someone else to explain his various marriages and monikers. The diminutive pop star's longtime publicist **Lois Najarian**, who spent the past five years at the venerable P.R. firm Susan Blond, Inc., is leaving him to be head of publicity at **Clive Davis**'s new label, J Records. One person who wasn't happy to hear the news was Prince himself; the anti-establishment rocker accused his soon-to-be-former flack of selling out. "He said, 'I can't believe you're joining the system. I thought you were different,' " Najarian tells us. "If anyone else had said that to me, I would have been very upset, but I've worked with Prince too long; I know what he's all about." At least someone does.

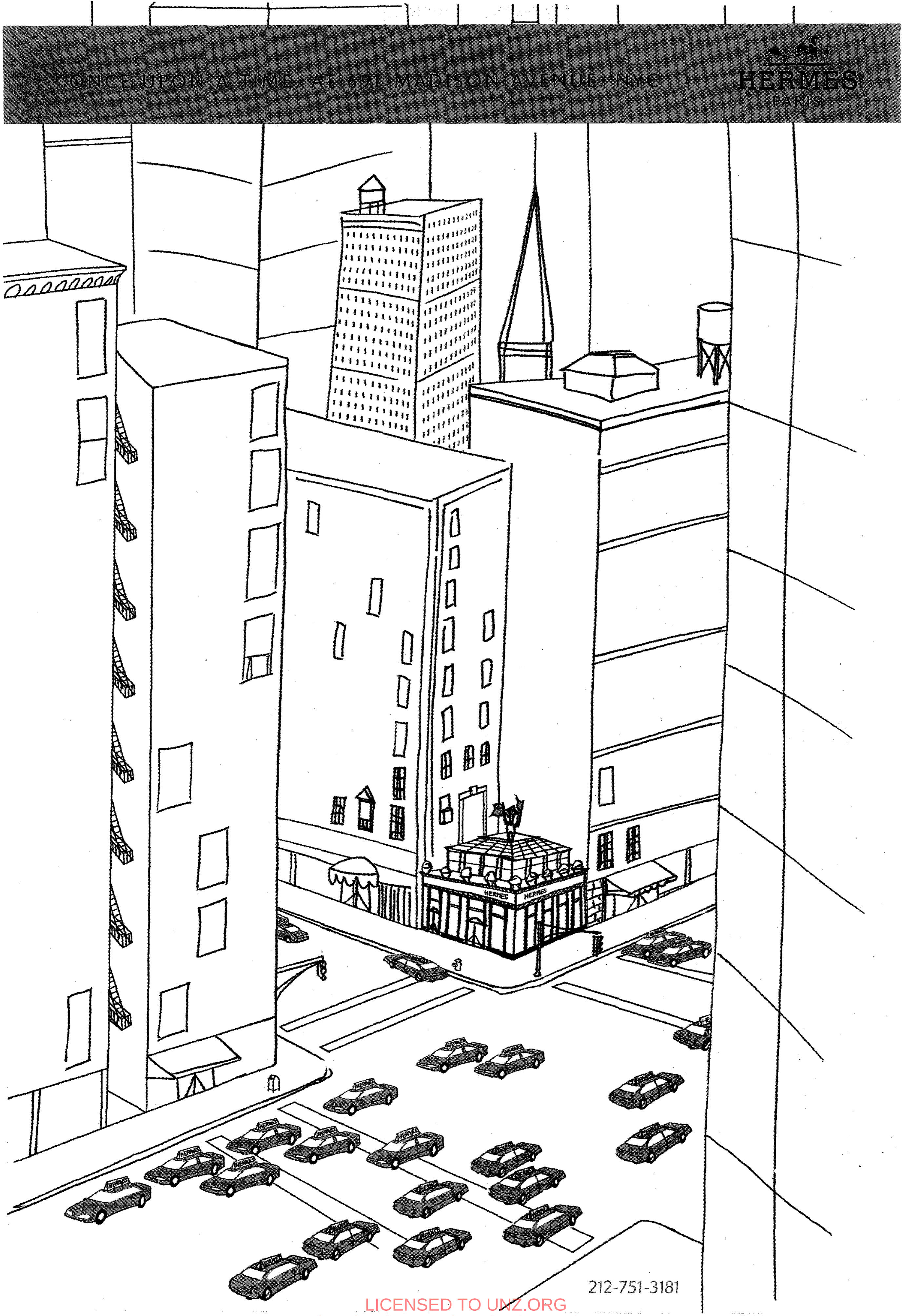
VACHEMENT BIEN: **Alain Ducasse** knows what makes a restaurant classy: the freshest ingredients, an elegant décor, and one of those bizarre cow sculptures that have been silently grazing all over town. The restaurateur behind the city's priciest joint recently herded one of the decorative bovines overseas to add to the ambiance of his latest place, 59 Poincaré, slated to open in December in Paris. Observant Gothamites will recognize the cow—shellacked in international flags—as the one that has been watching over the entrance of the United Nations all summer. Ducasse wouldn't tell us how much he shelled out for the creature, but we're happy to know at least one has found a new pasture.

Additional reporting by David Amsden and Abbey Goodman.

O.J.'S ROUGH CUT; TOM WOLFE'S TRUTH

Whether **O. J. Simpson** likes it or not, the mini-series he sued to keep from airing is just about ready for prime time. *American Tragedy* co-producer **Tom Fontana** had just come from seeing a rough cut of the two-part trial drama when we caught up with him at Court TV's fall season party at Patsy's last week. "It's got the same kind of intensity as *All the President's Men*," he told us. When asked who the audience is supposed to root for in a story about the Simpson defense team, Fontana explained, "It's a [**Barry**] **Levinson**–Fontana movie—there's not *supposed* to be any hero." And how will O.J. like the flick? "If I could read the mind of O. J. Simpson, I'd be in a much different place." Meanwhile, **Tom Wolfe** was less forthcoming in discussing his latest project, a novel about modern American campus culture. The author told us he's completed a research tour of various colleges and has gotten to work on the actual writing. As far as that goes, Wolfe said only, "Time will tell." He was more talkative when we asked why people seem to enjoy seeing him take public potshots at two-time Pulitzer winner **John Updike**. "They look to me as a beacon of truth," he said. Does *that* explain the white suits?

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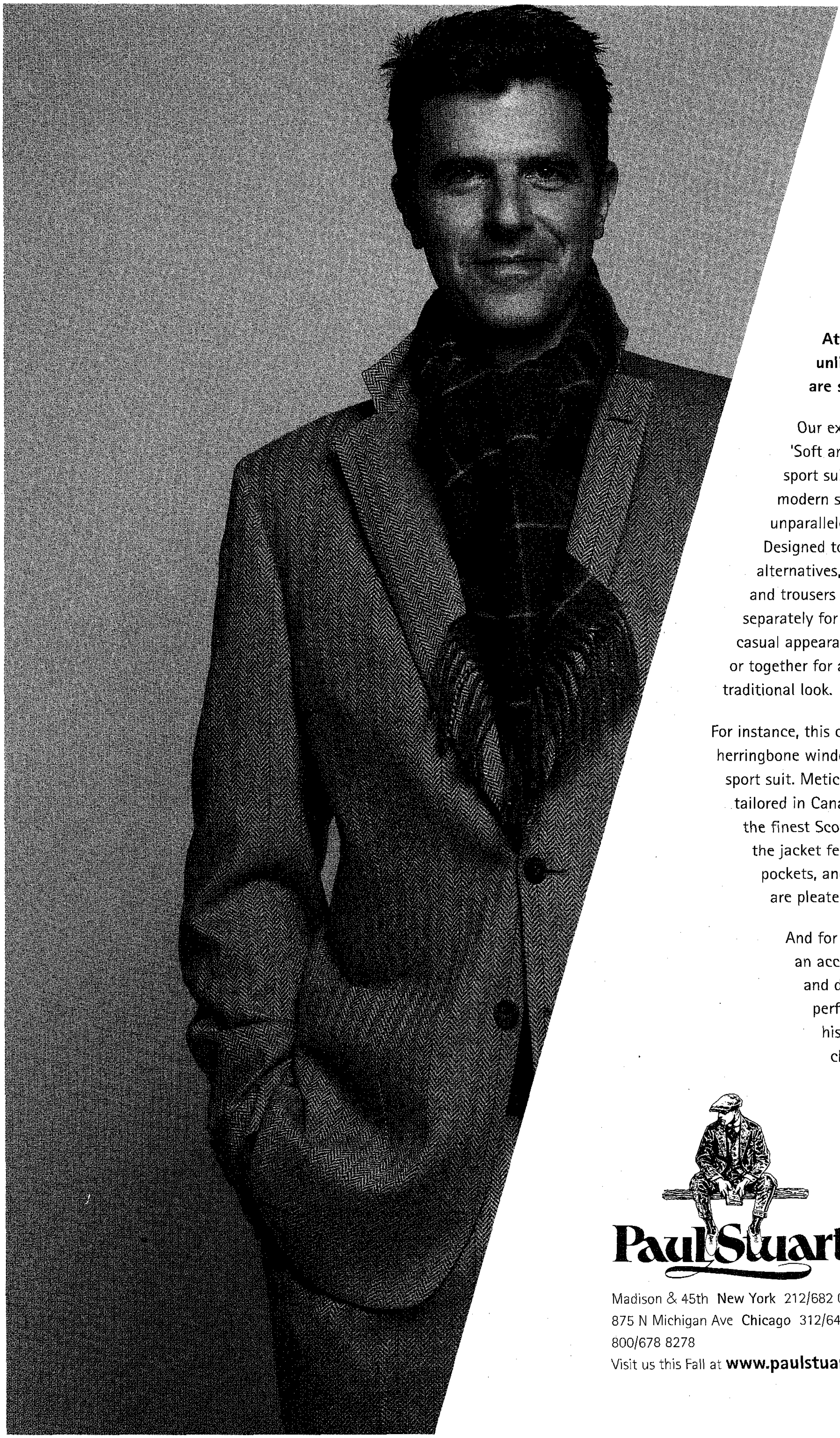

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GOTHAM

Tabloid Hunter

After grilling half the reporters in town, Oliver Platt thinks he's ready to play a journalist on TV. So who's asking the questions here, anyway?

FOR MONTHS, OLIVER Platt moved like a weather system through New York's media world as he prepared for his starring role as a newspaper columnist in NBC's *Deadline*, which premieres October 2. He lurked—to whatever extent this towering actor can successfully lurk—at media parties. He took journalists to lunch. And he spent endless hours hanging around tabloid newsrooms, soaking up the information he needed to portray "Wallace Benton," who (like most newspaper people we know) solves murder mysteries on the side. The city's journalists seemed to be hurling themselves into his path, flashing their wisdom like Rolexes.

Platt was seen rubbing shoulders with Tom Brokaw and Walter Isaacson at the Inside.com launch party and lunching with the *Times'* Alex Kuczynski. There was a hall-of-mirrors quality to it all: an actor talking to journalists about playing a journalist on a TV show whose success or failure would depend, to a certain extent, on what journalists thought of it.

As the only journalist in New York who *hadn't* been consulted by Platt, I decided to take matters into my own hands and visit him on the *Deadline* set in the old New York *Post* building on South Street. Who knew what character-defining trait he might yet pick up from me—an archly raised eyebrow, for instance—and use, and make his own, and thank me for come Emmy time? So, after Platt films a brief scene with Bebe Neuwirth and Hope Davis in the newsroom of the fictional New York *Ledger*, the two of us withdraw to his makeshift dressing room to discuss the results of his research.

"There was a hall-of-mirrors quality to it," Platt observes, settling into a chair. "You know: 'Here I am, talking to a journalist about playing a journalist in a show whose success or failure is gonna be determined to a certain extent by journalists.' " (Uncanny: The guy really *has* done his homework.) So what, in the end, has he learned about the profession?

"It's never as glamorous as you think it's gonna be," he says. "The newsroom is a petri dish of adolescent behavior. Most journalists have above-average intelligence and below-average salaries, and they're constantly interviewing people who make a lot more money than they do. So they have good reasons to be pissed off in an amusing way."

Platt really did take his research seriously, schooling himself to the point where he can now

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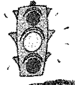
POLITICS Campaign-Trail Traffic Report



Chicks Nix Rick's Tricks: In-her-face debate tactic costs Ricky big, especially with women. Next debate, he wears SUPPORT ERA button. ●

Very sharp soft-money end-run makes HRC play defense. Who'da thunk that a candidate who said "Ban soft money" actually meant it? ●

Hill's lead almost double-digits now. Victim thing still working. Formula for hitting 55 percent: Get Monica to campaign against her. ●

What's maybe the only thing that's a bigger waste of money than a multi-million-dollar Senate race? The Whitewater probe. Good riddance. ●

otographs: top, Kareem Black; bottom, Richard B. Levine (2). Illustration by Ingo Fast.

Platt *continued from page 15*

discuss the relative merits of Breslin and Royko. "You just never know when you're gonna need it," he says. "Something will happen on the show, and I'll go, 'No, no, no, no, that's not the way it happens.' In one script, there was some name for photographers, and I said, 'That's not what they call them in the newspaper trade—they call them 'shooters.' "

While growing up abroad as the son of a diplomat, Platt spent a lot of time around journalists. (His brother Adam *became* one and is now a food writer for this magazine.) Some of his key New York sources give him high marks as a student and—should the acting thing not work out—as a potential summer intern. "Very enthusiastic," says Leonard Levitt, *Newsday*'s "One Police Plaza" columnist. "Unassuming and self-deprecating," says New York *Post* reporter Philip Messing, who let Platt join him for a shift at police headquarters one evening.

"He started to take an interest in specific stories and headlines and in how we play things," says Richard T. Pienciak, metro editor of the *Daily News*, where Platt spent a couple of weeks. "I found myself discussing with him how we were approaching a particular story. He became one of us. When he left, I felt like we lost somebody off the team—'Where's Oliver?' I'd love to have him around here."

And does Platt himself think he'd make a good journalist? *Grimace.* Then, more hopefully: "I'm nosy—"

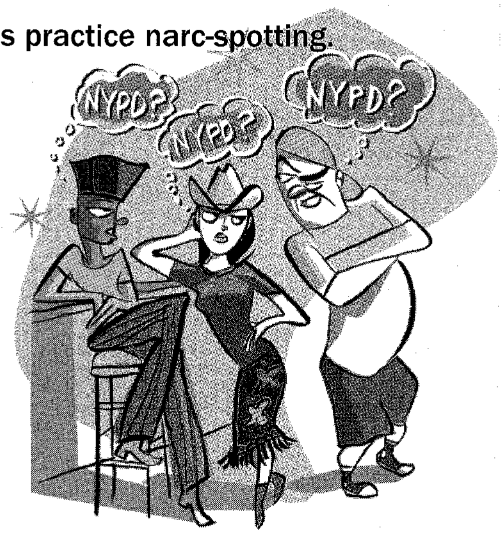
There's a knock at the door: Platt is being called to the set. As he rises, he smiles sideways and says, "Hey, if you need to make up some snappy quote for me, that's okay." The boy *has* learned something. Or maybe he was just slipping, effortlessly, back into character.

GEORGE KALOGERAKIS

CLUBS

New York Undercover

As clubs fill up with cops, partygoers practice narc-spotting.


NYPD?
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NYPD?

PART OF DESCENDING INTO THE UNDERWORLD ecosystem that is Manhattan nightlife is classifying the rich variety of subcultural species found there—the muscle-shirted Chelsea boy, the headphone-clad D.J. cultist, the glow-stick-waving rave kid. In the wake of last month's drug raids on clubs like Vinyl, Exit, and the Roxy, it seems that another species, thought to be extinct since the seventies, is staging a remarkable comeback: the narc.

"I was sitting at the bar of the Sound Factory last week with a bunch of friends, and this guido-looking guy whispers to me, 'Hey, man, got a couple of hits of X?' " says a regular at the west-midtown club. "Then he says, 'Come on, man'—*twice*—and starts bothering the people I was with. Finally, I said, 'Go away. None of us have anything, *officer.*' And he did." Another clubber says police have themselves become regulars at Twilo's monthly party featuring British D.J.'s Sasha and Digweed, but "you can tell they're undercover cops because their method is always the same: They'll ask, 'Do you have pills?' but they never name brands like Mitsubishi or Calvin Kleins."

A veteran clubgoer at Centro-Fly's popular Thursday-night house-music party "Subliminal Sessions" says that he was shocked to see an unhiply dressed man in his late thirties approach him for drugs—with a walkie-talkie visibly strapped to his waist. " 'You know where I can get any party favors?' " the clubber remembers him asking. "I was like, 'You're either really stupid or an undercover cop. Or both.' "

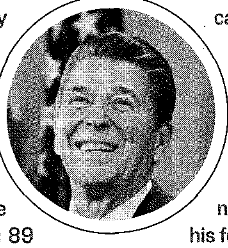
If this sounds like a simple case of strobe-light-induced paranoia, it isn't: A banner over Twilo's box office warns that "undercover police are always on the premises." Both an NYPD spokesperson and New York's special narcotics prosecutor, Bridget Brennan (who's prosecuting five arrests made at the TriBeCa club Vinyl), declined to provide specifics about undercover operations. But the spokesperson warns that "enforcement in nightclubs is ongoing, as we must respond to complaints from the community about such venues." In other words, that silk-shirted ecstasy-seeker could really be a camouflaged cop.

ETHAN BROWN

POLITICS

This Year's October Surprise?

THE MOST COMPLICATED SERVICE THAT CAN HAPPEN IN AN American church is a presidential funeral. And last week, the Secret Service began planning a very large funeral at Ronald Reagan's church, Bel Air Presbyterian on Mulholland Drive. Neighbors of the church say Secret Service agents asked to secure more parking for what they simply referred to as "a funeral." The Secret Service declined to comment, and Joanne Drake, Reagan's chief of staff, confirmed that Bel Air Presbyterian is the Reagans' church, but said she's not aware of any funeral planning. "He's doing as well as can be expected," she said when asked about his health. "He's 89 years old and he has Alzheimer's disease, which is a progressive disease."



"If they're making calls to secure more parking for a funeral at Reagan's church, they've got to be thinking it's happening soon," said a federal law-enforcement official, who noted that the agency usually doesn't contact civilians as part of its planning process unless it has to. "Why risk the public speculation?"

The speculation, in an election season, inevitably revolves around what impact the death of a beloved former president would have on the presidential campaign. If a presidential funeral occurs at Bel Air Presbyterian before the election, the campaign would disappear behind a curtain of retrospectives, tributes, and saturation coverage. Republicanism's best image would be reinforced for days. George Bush would be offered plenty of network opportunities to fondly reflect on his former boss, which would give voters a look at his human side and help his son. All Gore would be able to do is attend the funeral and slip back into Clinton's shadow. In his final public moment, the grand old man of the Grand Old Party might well help elect a Republican president.

LAWRENCE O'DONNELL JR.

Photograph: bottom, Susan Meiselas/Magnum Photos. Illustration by Tom Bacht

MEDIA

A Director's *Dream*

Paige and Palmer West's new company finances art-house movies and fine-art Websites. Their business plan? *Have too much money.*

‘OUR PHILOSOPHY IS, IF WE'RE GOING to fail, fail boldly,” Palmer West explains, sitting in the glass-walled conference room of Sibling Entertainment. Three years ago, Palmer, 27, and his sister Paige, 32, did what a lot of children with tons of cash and a liberal-arts education do: They started their own company. Paige wanted to educate the public about a new generation of artists, and Palmer wanted to finance the kind of cutting-edge films that major studios would never touch. Sounds overly optimistic, and under normal circumstances, failure should have been inevitable. But here they are just a few years later, with offices in the trendy Starett Lehigh building in Chelsea and several impressive-looking projects in progress. Paige has just launched the e-commerce portion of her Website, www.MixedGreens.com, an online art gallery for emerging artists, and next week Palmer's production company, Thousand Words, is releasing *Requiem for a Dream*, directed by Darren Aronofsky (of π fame).

The secret of their success? No-strings-attached financing, for one thing, thanks in part to their father, Al West, who's the multimillionaire behind SEI Investments, a high-tech investment-service company based in Oaks, Pennsylvania. *Requiem* cost $4.5 million, and Palmer, along with his business partner, Jonah Smith, didn't have to look for outside investors. “We're able to take risks because we bring the financing all the way through to prints and advertising,” Palmer explains.

“It's rare to find a company that's able to put all their resources behind their beliefs,” says Aronofsky. Director Richard Linklater, whose new film, *Waking Life*, is the next Thousand Words project, agrees. “So much of Hollywood is about protecting your own ass,” he says. “Palmer runs his own ship and goes with his gut.”

For Paige, the financial freedom means she can start an e-commerce venture at a time when many other online outfits are folding their tents. Mixedgreens.com works on the assumption that budding art buyers get into collecting, in part, to self-educate, not just to put work on their walls. Each of the 28 emerging artists represented by the site is the subject of a short online documentary and can be directly e-mailed questions about his or her work.

The artworks range in price from $75 to $7,500, but at Sibling Entertainment, it's not really about making a profit. The beauty of the Wests' business plan is that, basically, there *is* no business plan. “What we're doing isn't revenue-generating,” Paige explains. “It's idea-, passion-, and information-generating, and all that good stuff.”

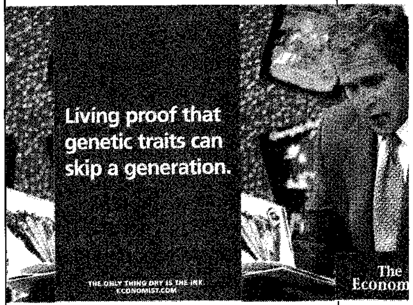
LIZ WELCH

BRAND X

Econ 101

BRAND: The Economist **AGENCY:** Weiss Stagliano Partners **CREATIVE DIRECTOR:** Marty Weiss **COPYWRITER:** Rick Condos

THE NATION THAT BROUGHT US Benny Hill and Scary Spice has also been bringing us *The Economist*—the world's most prestigious newsweekly—since 1843. But in an ADD-addled age, what's an ultra-erudite British media brand to do? Well, it can start by fronting some attitude. In its new image campaign (appearing in magazines, airports, and subway stations) with the tag line “The only thing dry is the ink,” *The Economist* attacks its stuffy-image problem by taking on our political candidates. A shot of Al Gore is headlined SPIN A POLITICIAN TOO FAR AND HE'S APT TO WIND UP WHERE HE STARTED. A shot of Bush gets LIVING PROOF THAT GENETIC TRAITS CAN SKIP A GENERATION. (An earlier ad poked fun at Hillary Clinton—shown wearing a Yankees cap—with the headline IT AIN'T OVER UNTIL THE FIRST LADY SINGS.) For *The Economist*, the U.S. market is paramount: Nearly half the magazine's circulation of 740,000 is based here. It's hard to imagine a U.S. publication making a big marketing push in the UK by implying that Tony Blair is a lightweight or that Queen Elizabeth is a stiff. But *The Economist* must think there's no quicker way to an American reader's heart than to embrace a fashionably casual cynicism about our public figures, even though the magazine itself still takes a decidedly smarter-than-thou approach to the news.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SIMON DUMENCO

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GOTHAM REALESTATE

REALTY BITES

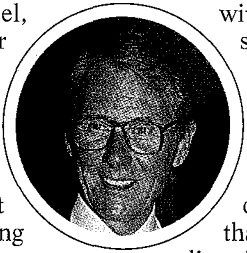
Wait Up!

Delays increase on new buildings.

LOOK CLOSELY AT YOUR LEASE; THAT "right of extension" might mean not just a week on a friend's couch but up to two months of homelessness. As gentrification and the demand for new apartments overwhelm electricians and carpenters, the clause—which gives landlords the right to delay occupancy for 45 or 60 days—is being invoked more frequently. "Nine out of ten Manhattan construction projects aren't completed on time," says Citi Habitats CEO Andrew Heiberger. "Tenants are so excited and emotional about finding an apartment they like, they don't notice that the landlord can write 60 days' leeway into the lease." Developer Larry Silverstein accelerated construction on River Place I, his new building on Twelfth Avenue between 41st and 42nd Streets, so apartments could be ready to accommodate recent graduates who moved to Manhattan to start jobs this fall. He didn't make it: A number of the apartments weren't finished in time, according to Nancy Packes, president of Feathered Nest Realty, and tenants were given the option to cancel their leases. "Hardly anyone backed out," she says, perhaps because of the Olympic-size pool, the basketball courts, and the difficulty of finding a new place on short notice. Over at One West Street, developer Joseph Moinian also had to take advantage of the extension written into leases in his latest conversion. "All tenants whose apartments weren't complete had the right to cancel," he says, "but I know of only three who did." A chunk of the building was rented out to NYU Law students, who moved in to find hot water, "but you might not have the doorknob for a closet, or a shade, or a microwave," he admits. Even a developer with as much pull as Donald Trump is a bit exasperated: "Skilled workers are hard to find," says the Donald. But "at some point, the boom will end. It always does." TARA PEPPER

Anchor Away

News flash: Bill Beutel cashes out of "snobby" building.



LAST YEAR, *EYEWITNESS NEWS* WARHORSE Bill Beutel, 69, gave up doing the 11 P.M. newscast. Beutel, who's been working for Channel 7 almost continually since 1962, kept his gig on WABC's six o'clock show, but now he's downsizing at home. Beutel and his wife, Adair, sold their seven-room pre-war co-op at 1220 Park Avenue and are moving to a smaller, less prepossessing apartment at 1150 Park. "It's not as elegant as his old building," says a broker, who noted that Beutel's apartment at "snobby" 1220—with high ceilings and a fireplace—sold in a matter of weeks. It had been on the market for $3.25 million. They don't have to do any work on their new place, a five-room that set them back just over $1.5 million, apparently a decent chunk of change for a place that's "like the apartment building I live in," says one broker. Oh, Bill Beutel, be well. CARL SWANSON

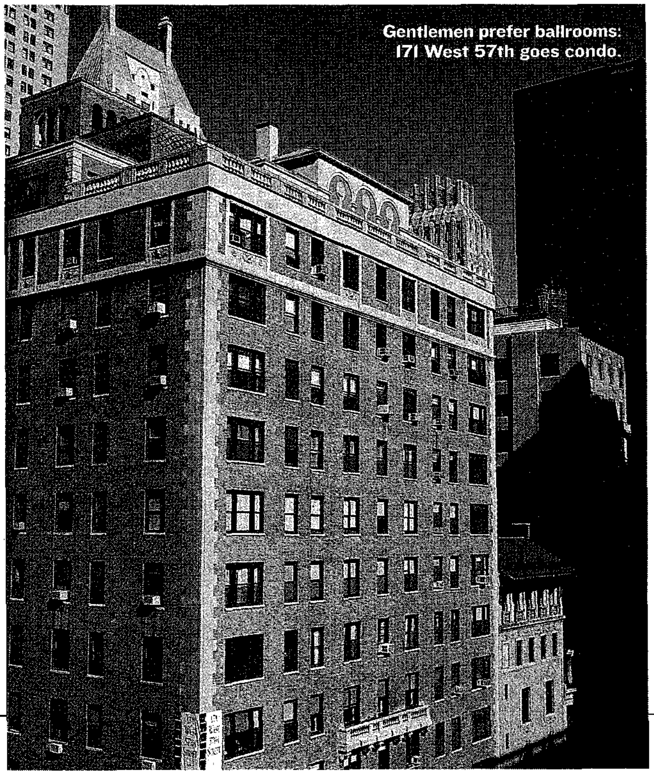
BIG DEALS

Midtown West

171 West 57th Street

Two-bedroom, two-bath, 1,900-square-foot condo. Asking: $1.425 million. Selling: $1.425 million. Charges and taxes: $1,498. Time on market: one day.

THE BRIARCLIFFE HAS BEEN A RENtal building to the stars since it was built in 1921. Barbara Walters lived there, as did the woman who wrote *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, and the ballroom-equipped penthouse was home to celebrity *macher* Earl Blackwell until his death four years ago. Earlier this year, the building's new owner began converting to condos, much to the delight of the buyer of this classic six, a designer who'd been living just across the street, coveting an apartment in the Briarcliffe for some time. There were nine vacant units; as soon as the FOR SALE sign went up, the designer called Douglas Elliman broker Iva Spitzer. High ceilings and fancy decorative fireplaces were bonus points, Spitzer says. T.P.



Gentlemen prefer ballrooms: 171 West 57th goes condo.

Murray Hill

231 East 35th Street

Three-family, 5,000-square-foot townhouse. Asking: $1.65 million. Selling: $1.5 million. Time on market: nine months.

WHO SAYS THE TOWNHOUSE dream is dead for middle-class Manhattanites? This couple figured out how to make it come true. Scout out a dumpy block in a decent neighborhood (in this case, east of Third Avenue, near the Queens-Midtown Tunnel). Then choose a house that's maybe a little down-at-the-heels, too. William B. May broker Kathleen Burns Hoffman, who sold this place, allows that it needs "heavy cosmetics." But the buyers, an interior designer and an artist, can more than handle that. And with a duplex for them to live in and two floor-throughs to generate income, they're living Manhattan's other dream: becoming homeowners without Harvard M.B.A.'s. CHRISTOPHER BONANOS

MIND
OVER CHATTER

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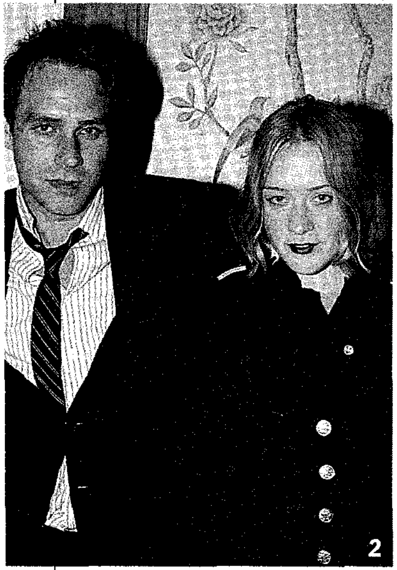
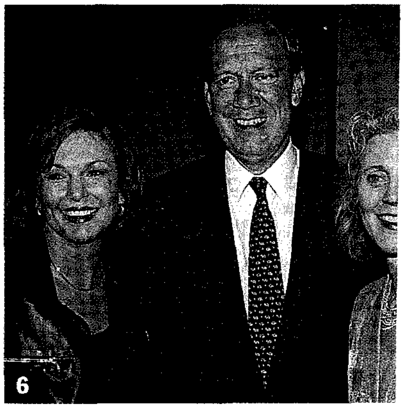
THE SCENE

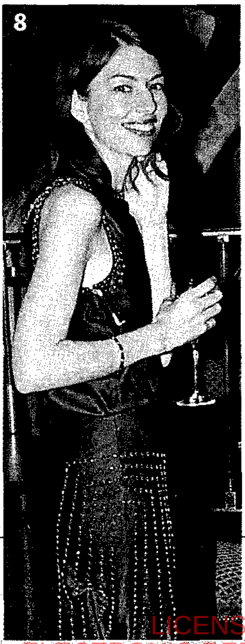
Jacobs's Ladder

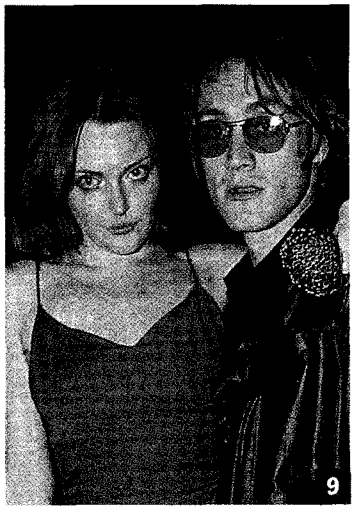
Photographs by Patrick McMullan

HORDES OF PRETTY THINGS SQUEEZED SHOULDER-TO-SHOULDER into Marc Jacobs's new menswear store, which was unveiled September 18 with a silent auction benefiting the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center. "They look like a bunch of sardines," sniped an aspiring editrix who'd just been snubbed by the door people. Inside, starting bids for men's crocodile duffel bags and cashmere, fur-lined coats ranged from $2,000 to $3,000: "What's up with *this*?" one scrunched reveler scoffed at a timid $350 bid. Meanwhile, twice as many in-the-know fashionistas were one door down at Paris Commune, where Jacobs has held his after-parties in the past. "My partner wanted to open the store here because this is his favorite restaurant," Jacobs said before being engulfed by paparazzi. "It's true," confessed Robert Duffy, president of Marc Jacobs International, squished in a booth. "It's *my* neighborhood. I love the people!" Male models slouched against any available wall space, showing off ostentatiously dressed-down Danzig T-shirts and trashed leather pants. Catching fresh air outside, model Christina Kruse did an impromptu fashion shoot with *Allure*'s Lucy Sykes. But the glam factor changed somewhat when a homeless man holding a MONEY FOR POT RESEARCH sign staggered into the frame. DEREK DE KOFF









1. Robert Duffy and Lisa Marie at the Marc Jacobs mens' store opening. 2. Paul and Chloë Sevigny at Bergdorf Goodman for the launch of its magazine. 3. Marcia Kilgore and Kathy Philips at Orsay celebrating Philips's *Vogue Book of Blondes.* 4. Lauren Flanigan and Anna Moffo at the New York City Opera's opening gala on the Grand Promenade of the New York State Theater. 5. Jay McInerney, Bret Easton Ellis, Candace Bushnell, and Morgan Entrekin at Nolita's following Bushnell's reading of her new novel, *4 Blondes,* at DKNY. 6. Phyllis George, George Pataki, and Blythe Danner at a *Meet the Parents* screening at the Tribeca Grand Hotel. 7. Larry King and Nanette Pattee Francini at the Sports Club/LA for a sneak preview of the club. 8. Sofia Coppola at Doubles celebrating the launch of a sparkling wine named for her. 9. Sophie Dahl and Anthony Langdon at Lotus toasting *Dazed & Confused* magazine's book *Star Culture.*

At this exact moment, this couple could be making mad passionate love on the beach in Big Sur.

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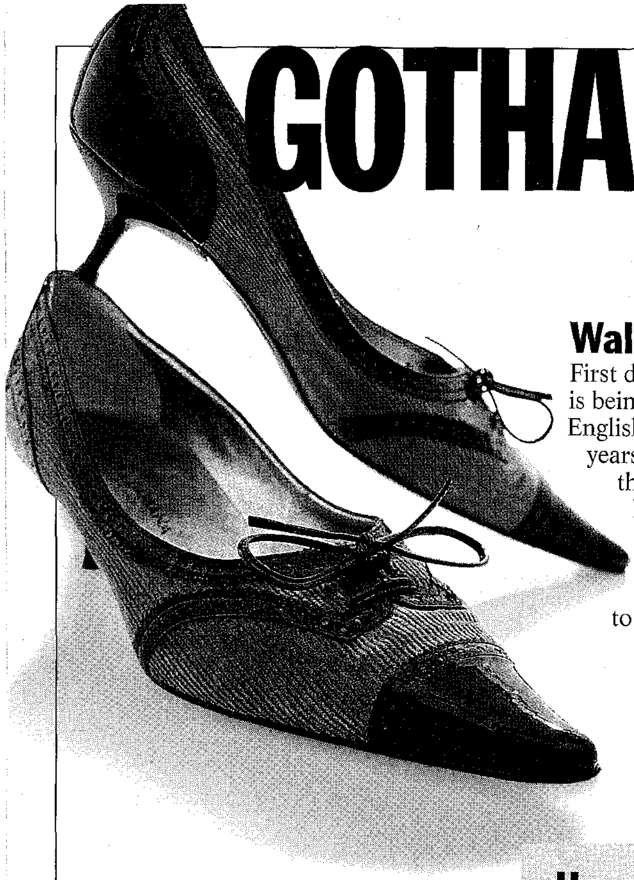
GOTHAMSTYLE



Wales Go Wide

First denim was rescued from fashion purgatory; now corduroy, its geeky cousin, is being elevated to must-have status. Once associated with sartorially challenged English professors, corduroy has seen its reputation upgraded over the past few years, thanks to cool cord pants cut by designers like Daryl K. But this season, the material has reached critical mass. Marc Jacobs, Chloé, and Jill Stuart have fashioned it into pants, jackets, tops, and skirts; Dolce and Gabbana took it a step further with shoes (pictured, $255). At H&M, corduroy suits were the subject of several tussles on a recent Saturday. But the real proof of the fabric's newly respectable stature is at Chanel, which used it to make a supremely elegant, full-skirted trench. NANCY MACDONELL SMITH

SHOP TALK

Bergdorf Goodman is the kind of department store that has a gloved doorman and a washroom attendant, and until two weeks ago, it was the kind of department store that was closed on Sunday, too. But in this shop-Sunday-or-else era (if not then, when?), Bergdorf's has opened its bronze doors on the once-official day of rest. Last Sunday, shoppers taking advantage of the six extra spending hours fought over Michel Perry stilettos before heading to the beauty-level café for a crêpe-and-coffee brunch (pictured). But while you can now have breakfast at Bergdorf's, don't even think about eating across the street—Tiffany & Company still isn't open. K.R.

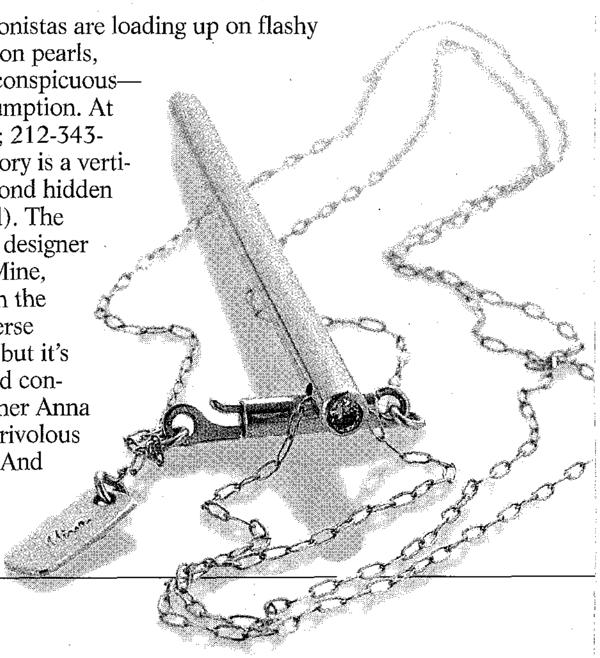
Horse Sense

Gisele is not the only shiny-maned, long-legged creature starring in advertisements this fall. Horses have joined—and in some cases replaced—models in several fall campaigns. A Calvin Klein ad features a mare's midsection opposite bespectacled models, Nadja Auermann is stretched across a white stallion in the latest Joop! campaign, and a horse's head completes the androgynous trio in the new Balenciaga ad. Last season it was llamas; now it's horses—could zebras be next? KRISTINA RICHARDS

JOOP
Calvin Klein

Stealth Wealth

While follow-the-leader fashionistas are loading up on flashy gewgaws and ropes of imitation pearls, style-setters are opting for inconspicuous—though still luxurious—consumption. At Hedra Prue (281 Mott Street; 212-343-9205), the best-selling accessory is a vertical gold pendant with a diamond hidden on either end ($355, pictured). The piece's success has prompted designer Sehti Na, who calls her line Mine, to add rings and earrings with the same secret feature. This reverse exhibitionism may be subtle, but it's true to the season's unabashed consumerism. Says Prue's co-owner Anna Kim: "There's something so frivolous about hiding the diamonds." And on the heels of diamond-encrusted cell phones, discreet frivolity is fine. N.M.S.



Photographs: clockwise from top, Joe Scafuro (2); Noah Sheldon.

ED KOCH VS. AL D'AMATO I'M RIGHT, YOU'RE WRONG

Our guys hold forth on Rick's manners, W.'s rodent problem, and Bratton's mayoral fantasies.

Maer Roshan: *So the fallout continues over Lazio's performance during last week's debate with Hillary. Senator, was that any way to treat a lady?*

Al D'Amato: Oh, no [*whining*]—Hillary's upset that Lazio intruded in her space! Bull! *I* think Hillary better get used to that if she's going to live in New York. I mean, what would she do on the subway? Her campaign runs these horrific ads attacking Lazio for everything! But when he walks over and says, "Here's a pledge to sign," her people complain, "Oh, he wasn't gentlemanly." Nonsense! Lazio did what he had to do. He showed he could stand up to her.

Ed Koch: You're wrong, Al. When the election is over, and Hillary wins, as I'm sure she will, people will see the debate as the moment when Lazio's campaign officially crashed. The mistake he made was to act like a macho adolescent. His advisers undoubtedly told him to assert himself. But what he did was act boorish and childish, and it hurt him. Because even though we all say men and women are equal, when your opponent is a woman, you've got to treat her with courtesy. But Lazio just waved this sheet of paper—"Sign! Sign!"—like *anybody* in their right mind would sign something they haven't read.

M.R.: *Let's talk about soft money, which has emerged as a hot-button issue both locally and nationally. Which side do you think gains from this debate right now? Is there any way to settle this?*

Ed: I believe each of the candidates should appoint what Lyndon Johnson used to call a "wise man" and have them sit down and hammer out an agreement on soft money.

M.R.: *Do you have two particular "wise men" in mind?*

Ed: Well, me and Al could do it. We'd work it out if they let us. But they won't.

Al: Hillary is on the defensive over this issue. I like Ed's wise-men idea, but it won't happen, because Hillary's campaign is getting millions of dollars in special-interest soft money. She makes a big fuss about these little conservative groups that contribute to Lazio, but none except one has contributed anything of any real substance—a million dollars. That's not the case on Hillary's side, where the unions have been pumping *tens* of millions into her campaign. You want to talk about ethical problems? Lets talk about the way the Clintons are using the presidency to advance Hillary's campaign. Last week, the president threw a state dinner for the prime minister of India. Six hundred guests . . .

Ed: And they all slept in the Lincoln Bedroom. [*Laughter.*]

Al: Just about. They had over 600 guests, most of whom had no connection with India at all. Instead, the guests were mostly Hillary contributors and New Yorkers working on her campaign. It's unacceptable. No administration has gone to these lengths. It's blatant *bribery* to prostitute state dinners like that. Joe Lieberman said it best. *Before* he was on the ticket, he said, Clinton and Gore "use the White House as a marketing tool."

Ed: If you ask him about it today, he won't remember.

Al: Or he'll tell you he was misquoted. By *Adam Clymer*! [*Laughs.*] Now, while we're on the presidential race, can we talk about the Republicans' RATS ad? What a sophomoric, silly, ridiculous, stupid stunt!

M.R.: *The guy who produced the ad says any subliminal message was accidental.*

Al: You believe that? Come on! Impossible. His denials makes it worse! How stupid do you think people are?

Ed: First he does it, now he lies about it. It's a cover-up. Watergate all over again!

Al: I wouldn't go so far. But it hurt the Bush campaign. It was unfair to Bush and unfair to the rats!

M.R.: *Bush has come off a miserable two weeks by any account. Now he says he's revamping his campaign and his message. Is it too late?*

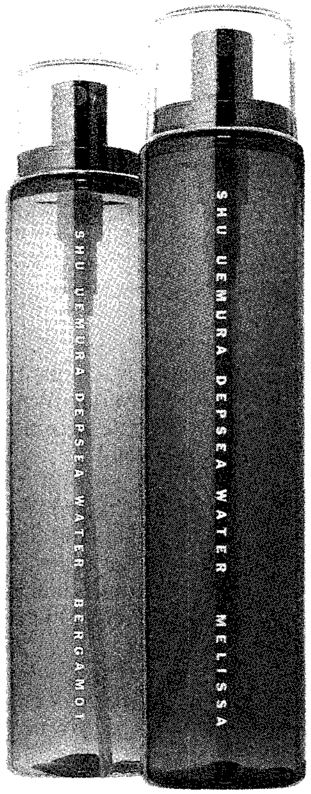
Ed: He can go kiss Oprah as many times as he wants, and it won't help him. He's unraveled, and like Humpty-Dumpty, he can't be put back together again. His election is no longer possible.

Al: I don't think it's over yet, but Bush needs to get on the ball. He needs to work hard and stay on message and prove to the American people he'll work 24 hours a day to earn their trust. But he's lucky he's facing Al Gore, who seems not to be able to distinguish fact from fantasy. Gore just can't tell the truth. His latest lie is how his mother-in-law pays more for her arthritis pills than her dog does. Nonsense! Just like he founded the Internet and discovered the waste dump at Love Canal. Bull! *I* was the guy who worked on Love Canal!

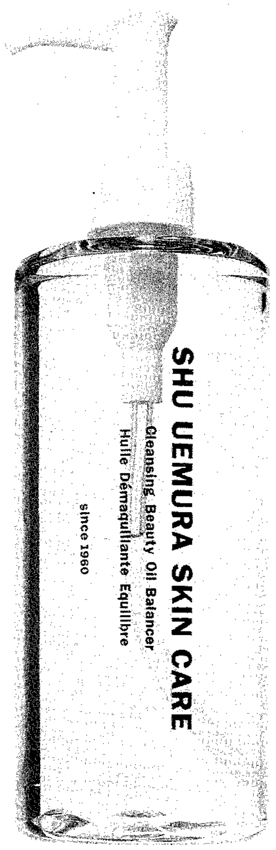
Ed: With respect to Al Gore's

ustration by S. B. Whitehead.

SHU UEMURA


SHU UEMURA DEPSEA WATER BERGAMOT
SHU UEMURA DEPSEA WATER MELISSA

SHU UEMURA
depsea water 150ml $20 rejuvenates, hydrates and heals face and body (bergamot or rose)



SHU UEMURA
cleansing beauty oil balancer 450ml $60 gently cleans skin and removes makeup

give good face

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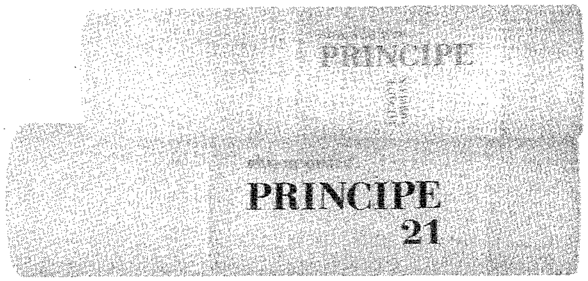

SHU UEMURA
principe eye zone complex 15ml $40 revitalizes the appearance of the eye area
principe 21 30ml $60 stimulates, hydrates, firms and restores skin radiance

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ED KOCH VS. AL D'AMATO

arthritis claims, I remember a television show about prescription drugs, where they compared a drug taken by horses and by humans: The horses paid a third of the price. Gore's not the only one to make that point. Did he add a few strokes here and there? Probably.

M.R.: *Bill Bratton recently announced he may run for mayor as a Republican. Does he have a chance?*

Ed: Well, I had lunch last week with Bratton, and he asked me that very question. And I responded no, because New Yorkers elect Republicans every 30 years, and only after a Democrat really fucks up. I told Bratton he shouldn't bother, but he still believes Rudy will support him 'cause he's a Republican—even though Bratton wasn't a Republican until last month! Truth is, Rudy *hates* the guy. He's nuts to think he'd get his endorsement!

M.R.: *You're always talking about how Rudy is kinder and gentler these days.*

Ed: Well, he's kinder and gentler to limited numbers of people. [*Laughs.*]

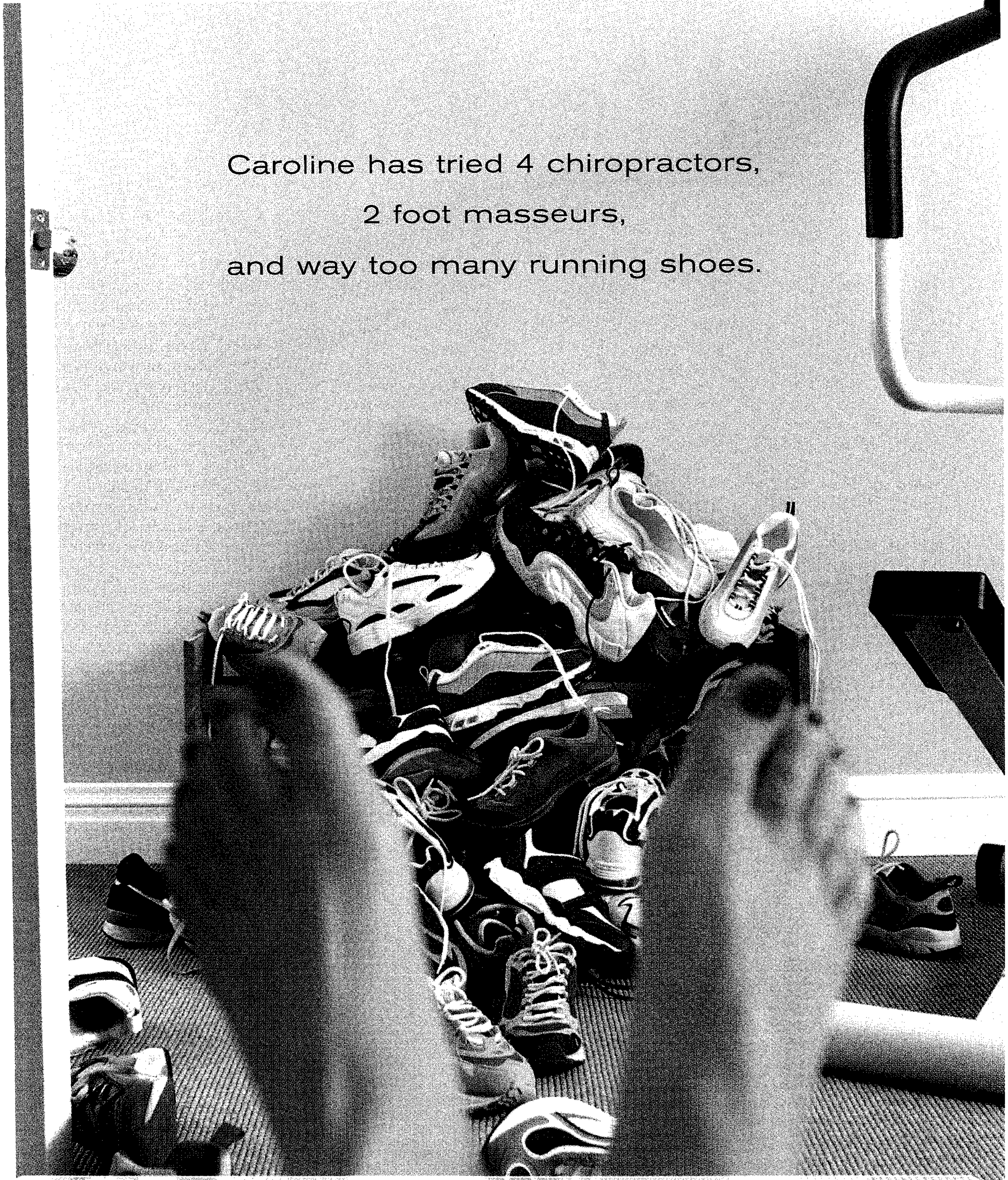
Al: It is almost impossible for a Republican candidate to win in New York City. I think one of the reasons Giuliani won is because New York was facing a calamity. Dinkins is a very decent person, but his administration was horrible! And even in that dire situation, Giuliani only won the second time around. Now, there *is* one way Bratton can win. This city, with its changing demographics, has become more volatile politically than ever before. If Sharpton enters the race, he could have a far greater impact than people realize. It could create great turbulence, making it impossible for a Democrat to emerge with 40 percent.

M.R.: *You're friendly with Sharpton, Ed. Do you think he'll really run?*

Ed: Sharpton wants to be a power broker. He has to decide whether he can do that by delivering the black vote or by running and subsequently delivering the black vote. *I* think he'll run. He thinks he can deliver 80 percent of the black vote, which he's done in the past.

M.R.: *Can he do it again?*

Ed: I think so. Remember, he came close to a runoff with Ruth Messinger. Al Sharpton is far more effective than he once was. Those who underestimate him do so at their own peril. ▬


Caroline has tried 4 chiropractors,
2 foot masseurs,
and way too many running shoes.

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MEDIA MICHAEL WOLFF

Al Gore Rhythm

In the science of elections, everyone overlooks the iron law of reversals: If you're up, then you're going to be down. Why can't the candidates just master the formula?

YOU TAKE A CALENDAR AND, working backward, you plot a campaign time line. If, obviously, you want a high point to be on Election Day, then, ergo, you should probably plot a low point round about the beginning of August—as Gore's was—and, assuming a three-to-four-month cycle, another low point six to eight months before (surely you can control the lows better than the highs), when, as it happened, Gore found himself in the shadow of Bill Bradley.

It is only my casual observation that major reversals occur every three to four months—Gore down in the fall, rising by spring, down in the summer, back up in the fall; Bush up in the fall, brought down by McCain in the spring, back up in the summer, and chopped liver at the moment.

This might just be the half of it. Perhaps you can graph the week—if you're down on Monday, you'll rise by Thursday. It's likely there's a day plan too—how you rise and fall with the daily news cycle. And there's probably a finely calibrated pre–Election Day time line, three weeks before, one week before, 24 hours prior. Last week's announcement by the Bush people that the campaign would now focus on issues, while on the face of it patently lame (copycat too!), was treated as a forceful step in his campaign for no other obvious reason than that he had been battered the previous week (this positive, however, is against the movement of a much larger negative trend).

You might be able to plot this, and perhaps someone has, on an algorithm basis—it's action-reaction; there's a limited supply of positive words (*forcefulness, traction, high positives*) that can be used in a fixed period—and derive a more accurate time-to-reversal metrics than I am suggesting here.

Now, most of the science of electioneering is well known and studiously reported on by the media—opposition research, overnight polling, war room, quick-response teams, gender targeting, etc. But the timing thing, a kind of biorhythm for campaigns, is tetchy business because, unlike campaign tactics that are designed to influence or manipulate voters, this is all about playing the predictable behavior of the media.

WE NOW UNDERSTAND, FOR INSTANCE, IN direct counterpoint to what we thought just weeks ago, that Al Gore has a great personality and lots of integrity. The great-guy-magnificent-citizen vector began in the middle of August and, accordingly, should take him through to Election Day.

Make no mistake: I am grateful for the new Gore. But still, it is an improbable development.

If you're paying close attention, and, of course, there aren't many who are, this is weird and badly plotted stuff. Gore suddenly in harmony with Oprah. Gore, with one of the most significant deficits among women of any national Democratic candidate in recent memory, now the favorite of women everywhere. Gore entirely out from under the Clinton relationship.

What is the logic of this reversal?

Is it possible that a banal convention that few people watched had such a mesmerizing effect on the nation?

Was the Lieberman thing truly that big (another example of America's transforming and mysterious love affair with the Jews)?

Or could it be that we in the media are just correcting our past misperceptions—Gore was, in fact, never remote, disconnected, and phony but actually forceful, personable, and genuine? Indeed, it seems we are correcting a double misperception—instead of being charming and capable, Bush, now revealed by a series of malapropisms, is obviously a feckless chucklehead (never mind that he's been mashing syntax and pronunciations for the past year).

Of course, this media flip-flop prompts another question: Who exactly has changed his or her mind? Do you personally know any Gore haters who are suddenly saying great guy, good kisser? Or, for that matter, Bush people who are now saying they just never realized how bone-dumb Junior was before?

In campaign engineering, we know that all but a relatively small increment of voters are fixed points. And certainly the 5 to 7 percent of undecided people, concentrated this season, we are told, in four or five Rust Belt states, are by definition ambivalent (read: They couldn't care less)—hence not the stuff of sudden, revelatory turnarounds.

On the other hand, it is probably such ambivalence and basic lack of interest—not just on the part of the undecided but on the part of the majority of people who know which way they'll vote—that creates the context for dra-

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matic reversals. Few people are passionate enough or invested enough to object to a candidate's being upended and upbraided and made into a joke.

Nobody (who isn't paid) is defending anybody.

We are not unwilling at all to see these guys, in their turn, taken down.

IT HAS BECOME A BIG PART OF OUR JOB, the media job, to foster, encourage, and moderate these improbable reversals. Certainly the keen interest in debates, as uninformative a 90 minutes as you're likely to find on television, is about setting up and televising that single moment when, by a slip or stutter or gesture, the advantage is lost or gained.

Indeed, the post-ideological tone of modern presidential campaign coverage is now largely about watching a more-or-less sorry human comedy. Because no one identifies with people who run for office anymore, coverage has taken on a look-at-these-poor-bastards kind of omniscience.

These are not candidates who represent ideas and programs so much as allegories representing human weaknesses and failings.

The fate of the candidates provides certain wider lessons about overreaching, and the perils of ambition, and the difficulties—the impossibility—of ever escaping our own human flaws (mangled syntax is a perfect symbol of such inescapable flaws).

No matter how high we fly, fate (fate and media are similar arbiters, in this instance) will always bring us down. Even if we win, it will be costly.

Then there is the social-science aspect of our coverage, wherein the candidate becomes a sort of Rorschach test. The story we seek is about what voters really perceive, what angels or what demons they perceive, in this blot known as the candidate—or what we in the media perceive voters to perceive. The subliminal RATS frame in the Bush ads was uninspired but obviously intended. Perception has become the most powerful political force—as patronage used to be.

Polling, of course, gives us the basis with which to measure these dawning perceptions. We comb the polls for such meaning, such deviations. Big news is the discovery of a new perception (let us not, at this time, get into the nuance that candidates are perceived on the basis of how we, the people who are reporting about the perception, present the candidates). Now, as it happens, there are few working reporters who actually understand anything about polling, or who have ever questioned the underlying methodology of a poll. Hence, the poll moves from quantitative information to anecdotal information—we report it as an event, as though the election has occurred. Of course, the wide reporting of polls (such-and-such a poll by such-and-such an organization you've never heard of puts Gore eight points ahead!) as actual events turns around and helps fulfill the accuracy of the theoretical report.

Then, too, in the logic of reversals, there is our economic self-interest. Reversals are good for business. The rehabilitation of Al Gore means we have a playable story. A horse race. A presidential dead heat. What Andrew Sullivan recently called, with a skip in his voice, "this unexpectedly fascinating election."

"You win on your ability to control the velocity and incline of your trajectory, both up and down. Perception-wise, you can assume that **at some point in the campaign, you will appear to be the opposite of what you are."**

I should note that I am not suggesting press bias. What's going on here is actually the opposite of bias. Contravening the age-old Republican fears of a liberally biased press is a knee-jerk objectivity at the root of the reversal. In other democratic countries, each media outlet states its bias and more or less delivers its dutiful message. In American journalism, fairness becomes the bias. At some point, after taking a beating, if you provide the least pretext, good things will be said about you; or, conversely, if you've been the beneficiary of positive stuff, that munificence comes back to bite you.

Who's in and who's out is just part of the natural flow of the campaign cycle.

HERE, THEN, IS HOW YOU, THE CANDIDATE, should work this new reversal paradigm.

The immutable law of reversals holds that you can count on members of the press running in the same direction. The ultimate job of the campaign is therefore to try to control at what point the counter-stampede begins.

But the reversal itself of, say, 125 to 165 degrees (media always preserve a little wiggle room) is a certainty. Everything that rises must come down; when you hit the bottom, you can count on coming up. Because a campaign is finite, you win on your ability to control the velocity and incline of your trajectory, both up and down. Perception-wise, you can assume that at some point in the campaign, you will appear to be the opposite of what you are, so the crux of your job, or of your campaign operatives', is to see to it that your positive opposite strikes as close as possible to Election Day—indeed, positive press at the wrong time can lose you the election.

This law of reversals is called, too, more bombastically, "the swing of the pendulum."

"The snickermongers now encouraging the bashing of Bush have to worry about another swing of the pendulum," writes William Safire, doubtless aware that the pendulum has quite a fixed arc and that, at this point, it is pretty unlikely that it could accomplish the double reversal needed to save Bush.

This law is also called peaking too early—but that suggests you've given it your all and didn't have what it takes to persevere. Rather, it seems to me, the real problem is peaking too late. You want to go down with time to come up.

"Let's conserve the positives," I once heard a political consultant say—I thought he was talking about how to stay up when you're up; now I understand he was talking about having to pay back on your positives (which, in a sense, are borrowed from the media) when you could least afford it. The Bush people are now making a balloon payment.

What was the Bush campaign thinking to let itself ride so high in June and July? That's dopiness for sure.

Still. With the new speed of information, you ought to be able to enhance the pace of reversals. If you can shrink the reversal cycle to two months, we could, just in time, see a charming and irascible George W. again. ■

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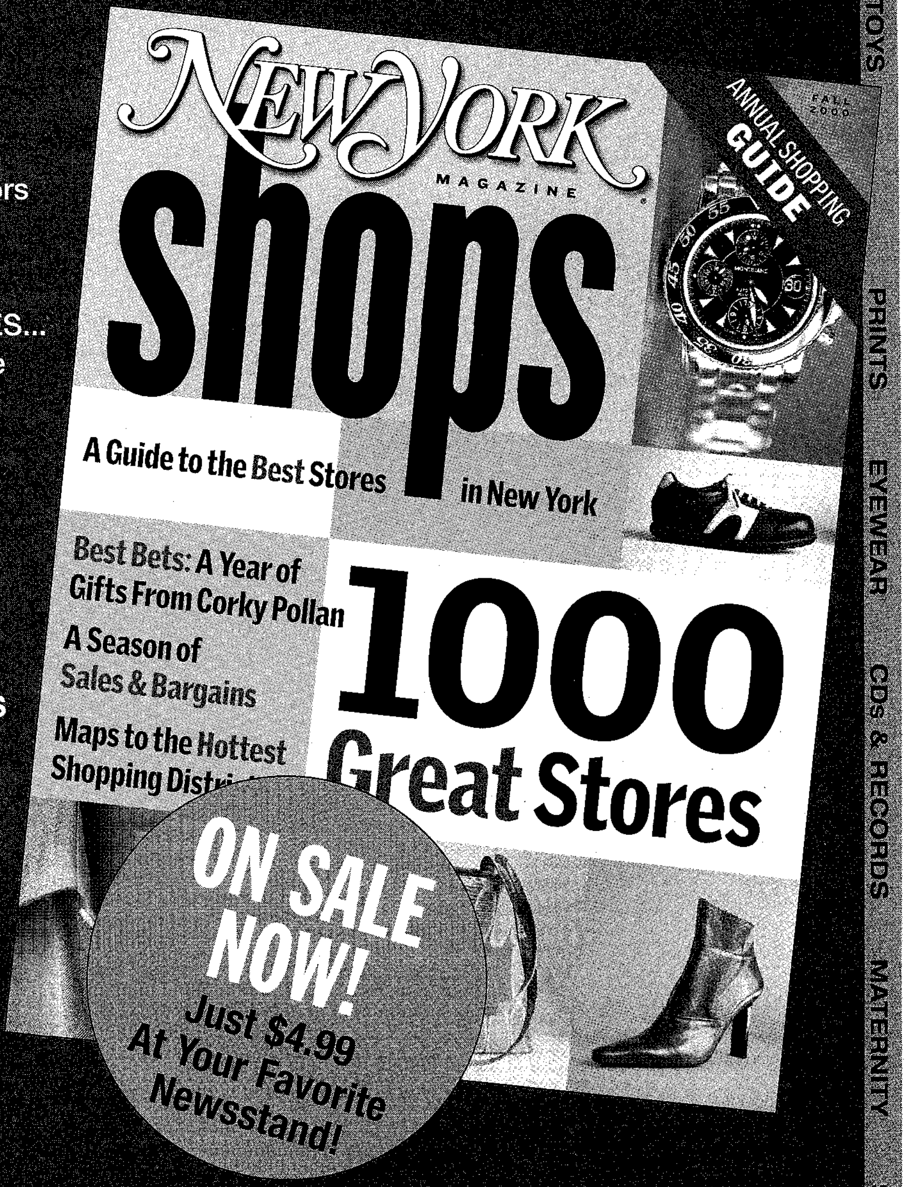
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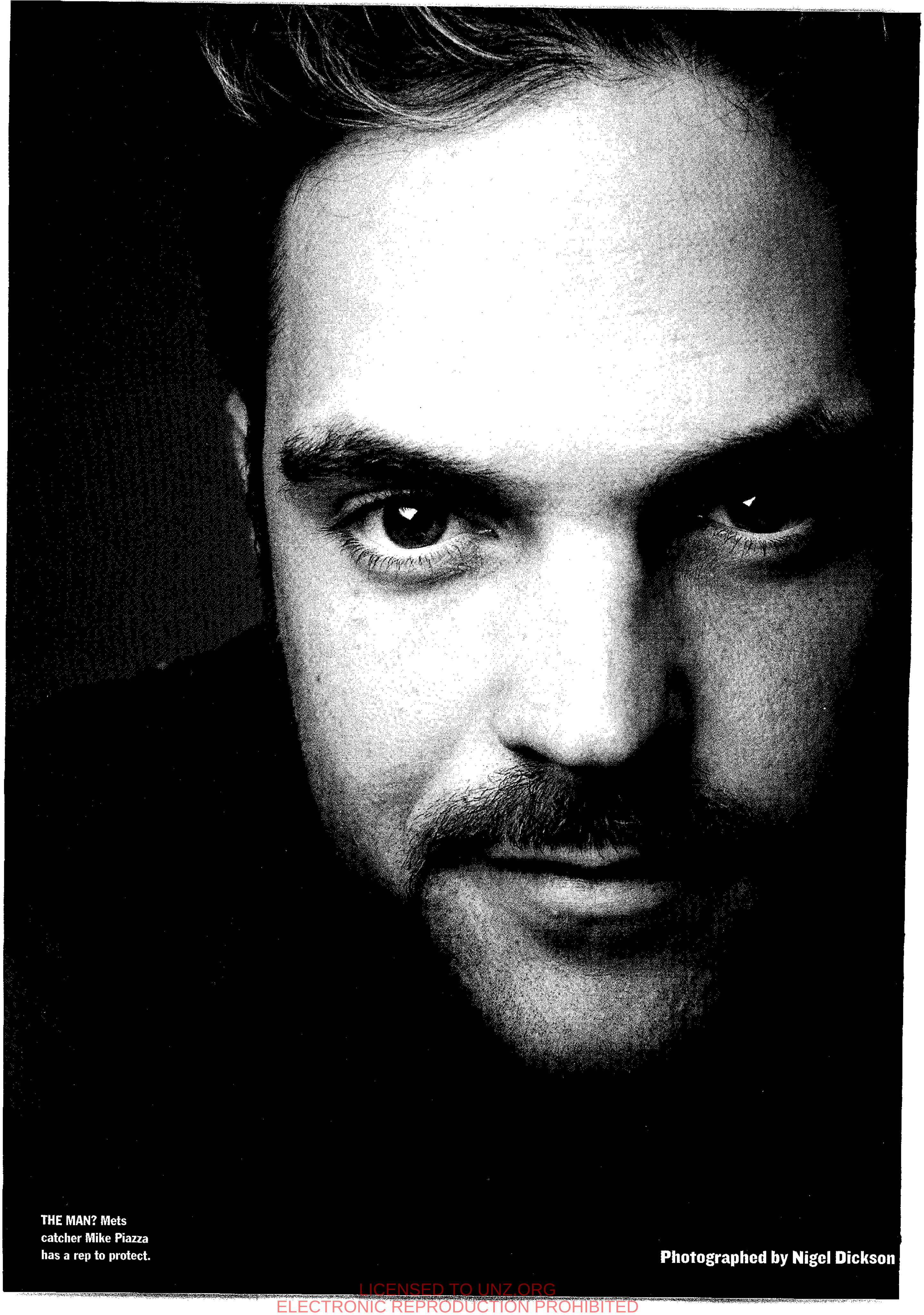
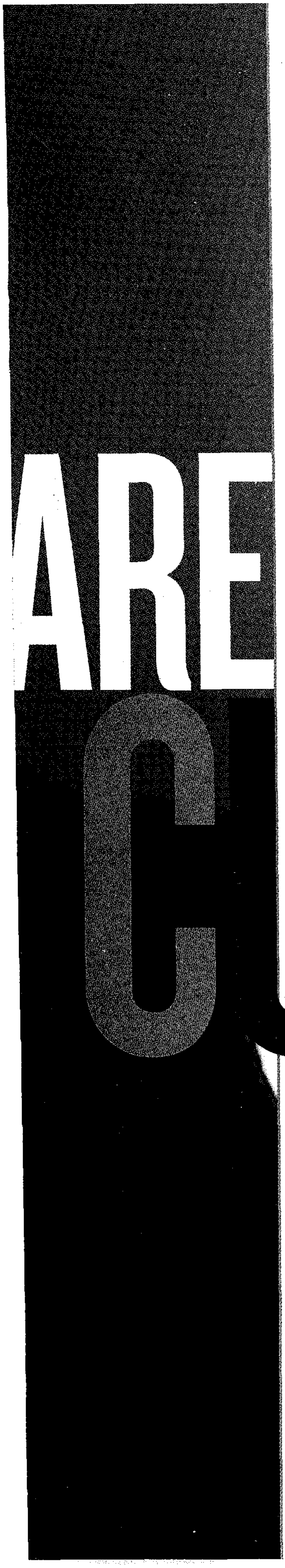


THE MAN? Mets catcher Mike Piazza has a rep to protect.

Photographed by Nigel Dickson



For all their talent and character, Piazza and his team can't seem to do things the easy way—which makes for amazing September drama. By Chris Smith

ARE THE METS CURSED?

MIKE PIAZZA SMILES. HE'S STANDING IN FRONT OF HIS LOCKER, PEELING OFF HIS black Calvin Klein undershirt and boxer-briefs. The Mets won last night and are preparing for another game against the dreary Montreal Expos. Their date with disaster in Atlanta is still a day away. Piazza and the Mets aren't denying their troubles. But logic and temperament dictate that it isn't time to panic. Especially not for Piazza, the greatest-hitting catcher in the history of major-league baseball. Even though his September batting average stands at an anemic .146, Piazza is simply too good not to bust out of his slump soon. • *But when, Mike, when?* Reporters keep pelting Piazza with minor variations on this relentless refrain. *Are you starting to feel locked in? When are you going to take it to another level? When are you going to step up?* • Piazza, alone for a moment, laughs. His large brown eyes, set wide in his face, give him a look of equine poise, even in times of crisis. "I've been trying to invent a new cliché to replace *stepping up,*" he says. "That's the most overused term in sports. I've got to invent a new one. I'll test out a few phrases and see what catches on. How cool would that be, if you could think up a term like *step up* and see all these guys using it in interviews? I need to start watching more of Don King's interviews. I heard him say one time, 'These are tribulations and infractications! These are hypocrisies and hypotheticals!' He's funny, man—he's amazing. Maybe I can borrow something from him."

Piazza's own cool is admirable, and it's the perfect emotional counterweight to Bobby Valentine, the manager who is descending into the self-destructive verbal twitches of his annual September fever dream. Spells, shades, and media frenzies haunt the Mets this time of year. Piazza is right to summon a sorcerer. To chase the haints of fall, the Mets could sure use some timely hitting. But a good Don King trickeration wouldn't hurt.

ONLY IN AMERICA? ONLY IN FLUSHING, Queens.

On August 31, a six-week, 30-13 wave crested with the Mets alone in first place for the first time all season, and I set out to write a happy story: how the Mets had built a team loaded with talent and resilience, one capable of surpassing the Braves once and for all, and maybe even the Yankees.

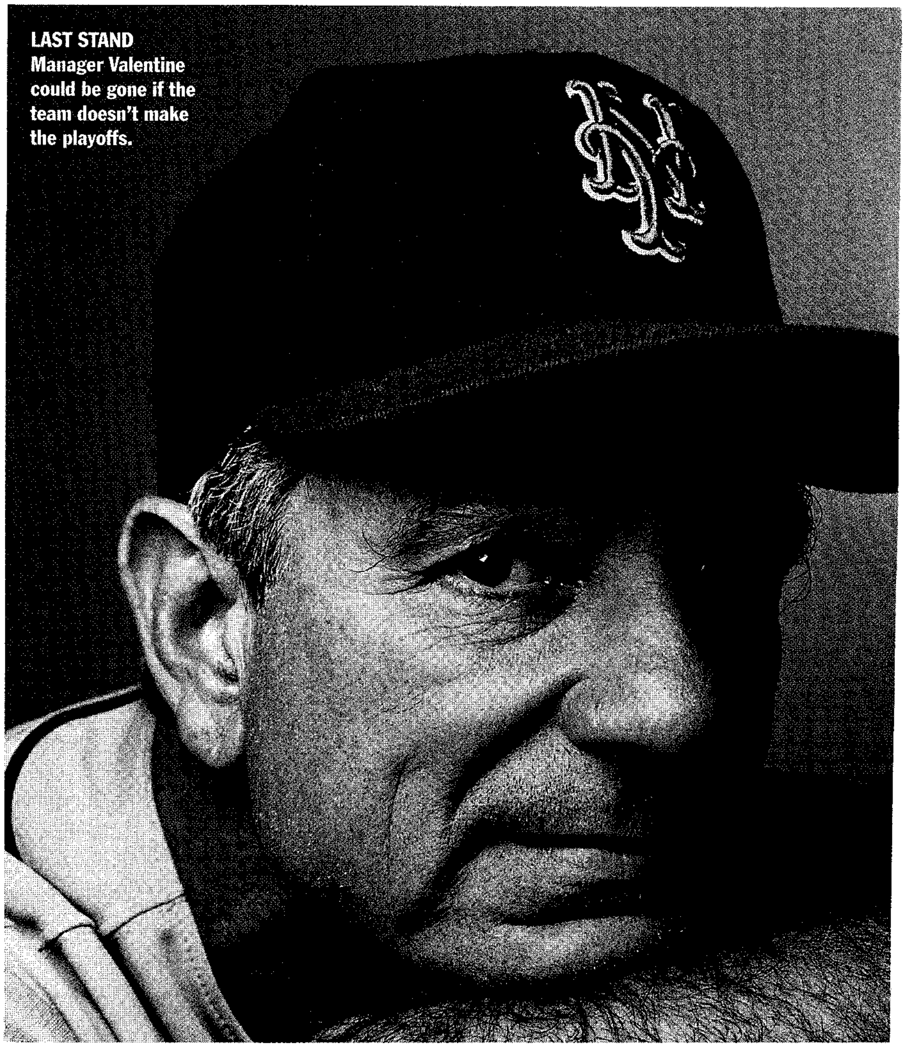
But as a lifelong Mets fan, I should have known better. Even as the transiency of pro sports has reduced fandom to "rooting for laundry," in the words of Mets fan Jerry Seinfeld, the Mets somehow remain true to their franchise DNA. The Mets aren't burdened with the gloppy fatalism that clings to the Red Sox and Cubs. But what's joyful and frustrating about the Mets—and what makes it hard and worthwhile to be a Mets fan—is that you can never count on the predictable.

The Mets have had exactly one dominant team in their 39 seasons, and that crew grabbed a World Series by the width of Bill Buckner's legs. The 1986 Mets, with young Gooden and Strawberry and wily Carter and Hernandez, were supposed to be the foundation of a dynasty, but they were rapidly undone by stupid trades, ego, and addictions.

This year's edition looked far more stable. An elite staff of starting pitchers. A closer, Armando Benitez, who has been automatic. Solid offense, led by Piazza and second baseman Edgardo Alfonzo, baseball's most underappreciated all-star.

And then there was a characteristic that couldn't be captured in a box score, an uncanny resilience, both individual and collective. Center-fielder Jay Payton missed two seasons, his right elbow torn apart and rebuilt by surgeons three times; now he's a strong Rookie of the Year candidate. Todd Zeile, acquired over the winter, had to learn to play first base at the baseball-senior-citizen age of 34. The positively antique 40-year-old John Franco has swallowed his ego and become a setup man for Benitez. Benny Agbayani, product of the baseball nowheresville of Hawaii, outlasted Rickey Henderson to finally win a job. The resilience extends to the front office, where Steve Phillips, the general manager, held on to his job and his family after the public humiliation of an exposed extramarital affair.

The qualities that lifted the Mets through the winning streaks of July and August are still present. But in the middle of the team's third straight September swoon, the Mets' resilience is facing its most severe test. The team made a valiant run into the National League Championship Series last season. This year, there's more at stake. Unfair as it is, Piazza and manager Bobby Valentine have their reputations on the line: Follow this September slide with anything less than a trip to the World Series, and they'll forever be labeled late-season chokers.



LAST STAND
Manager Valentine could be gone if the team doesn't make the playoffs.

PLENTY OF THEORIES HAVE BEEN ADvanced to explain what has happened to the Mets this month. But the mystery was actually solved in Montreal.

It's my fault.

Bobby Valentine told me so, over breakfast at the Le Centre Sheraton. This is a fan's classic nightmare: that we're personally responsible for the team's collapse. But Valentine doesn't see me as a Mets fan. He sees me as one of his, and his team's, worst tormentors: the media.

The Mets are coming off three wins in four days, and while they aren't crushing their opponents, the team appears to have snapped out of the funk that descended on September 1 in St. Louis in the first of three painful, last-inning losses. Even the manager seems to be having some fun again. After a game at Shea Stadium, I offer to buy Valentine a meal if he has a few spare minutes when the Mets are in Montreal, not really expecting him to take up the invitation. "Sure," he responds sunnily, with a broad smile. "I'd be happy to do it."

And he still looks happy as he slides into the semicircular banquette opposite the restaurant's Saturday-morning brunch buffet, dressed crisply as always, today in pressed khakis and a handsome black-and-white-checked button-down shirt. Valentine looks very weekend-casual-suburban-dad and sounds it, too, as he chats about sending e-mail to his teenage son, who is visiting the University of North

Carolina and applying for early admission.

Then I begin to ask Valentine about the heartbreaking end of the 1999 season in Atlanta, when a thrilling and exhausting playoff run—

"Hey!" Valentine says, cutting me off. "The only thing that matters to me is my job, and my team. This stuff, as wonderful as it seems to be, the coverage that the Mets are going to get—I don't really give a shit about it. I want to say that right up front. To tell you the truth, reminiscing at this time, or going back or evaluating or appraising, is really something that is against my nature right now. Just so you understand. It's been a long season; we've been through a lot. The one thing that you hear in sports often is that you need focus, especially at this time of year, and I think that that focus is needed by the manager as well as the players. And I'd be willing to bet that our competition doesn't have to worry about this kind of article being written at this time of year. For whatever it's worth, I don't take offense to it, but I *definitely* don't go along with this whole thing. If I was Joe Torre or Tommy Lasorda, or anybody in any of these other small markets where you can control things through your P.R. department, I would have put a stop to it. It's very detrimental to the psyche of the players. And maybe of me too. I don't know. I doubt it."

There are a couple of clowns in our market where if I win the World Series," says Valentine, "they're going to say I didn't sweep."

Clichés about "focus" are indeed a standard coaching trope. But there's a vehemence in Valentine's voice, and his volume keeps rising, and for fifteen minutes he continues to rant. I'm relieved when he pauses to sink his gleaming white teeth into a bagel with lox, because Valentine's incisors seem aimed right at me.

"Is there a San Francisco or Seattle magazine that would have the *audacity* to do a story like this at this time of the year?" Valentine spits. "*No.* Absolutely not! To try to have breakfast with Lou Piniella to talk about last year and the playoffs? Right now, with him having a two-game lead? *Absolutely not.*"

He can't be serious. I'm frantically trying to figure out what misdirection play he's running. But then Valentine's words and fears become direct and crystalline.

"Last year at this time, there was a really nice guy that I talked to who wanted to do a story about me and the Mets," Valentine says, referring to S. L. Price of *Sports Illustrated*. "He e-mailed me and told me how he wanted to do this human-interest story about my relationship with a guy who had died, who used to coach in my hometown, Stamford, and my connection with my hometown, and how I kept up the connection and had grown with the community. I said, 'That's great.' He came in with all intentions of doing that story. But guess what? It wasn't good enough for his magazine, 'cause we lost seven games in a row during the time he was around! So he came out with a story in the last week of the season about why we were losing seven in a row! And the story just about got me fired and had a lot of things in it that I didn't even imagine would ever appear in print. That said, you seem like a wonderful guy."

Last year's losing streak did cause the Mets problems, but Valentine skips over what really set the house on fire: his own words in *S.I.*, calling five of his players "losers" and his entire roster "not real intelligent." I have no idea whether I resemble S. L. Price. But a losing streak late in the year, a magazine reporter asking questions—clearly, Valentine is spooked.

Reporters have been on a Valentine Alert all year. It's one of the things that makes me like Valentine, knowing that he lives under insanely microscopic scrutiny. For long, silent minutes after games this month, reporters have stood in Valentine's office, waiting for him to freak out. All summer, he's largely bitten his tongue. Now, even before he gets to Atlanta, Valentine is unraveling. I ask about the prevailing sports-page wisdom that he's been quiet because he's in the last year of his Mets contract.

"That's insulting," Valentine fumes. "I haven't read that, so I'm glad I didn't have to get insulted. It's insulting because it infers that I'm doing something for a new contract. The only reason that the situations have been less focused on me is because the players are a different group of guys. I've been exactly the same person, because that's what I am. There haven't been as many situations for cheap-shot artists to take cheap shots, or situations to get overblown because the [players] haven't allowed it to. It's simple."

Yet after two embarrassing losses in Atlanta, Valentine couldn't help turning the attention back on himself, suggesting he should be fired if the Mets miss the playoffs and waking the ghosts of last September, when Valentine also volunteered his head.

No one ordered Valentine to do this interview. If I'm such a menace, why is he talking to me at all? " 'Cause you're a nice guy, I think," Valentine says. Which is swell—and silly. Maybe it's his eternal optimism, that things will come out right this time. Or maybe, no matter how much trouble his mouth has caused before, Valentine can't not talk.

TO BE METSIAN IS TO BE PERVERSE. "THE last few years, we've been in good situations and then we make it tougher on ourselves," says Edgardo Alfonzo, sounding not complacent, just analytical. "That's the way we're used to doing it."

"When our backs are against the wall," says pitcher Rick Reed, "we come out fighting."

Reed knows plenty about tough times. He'd been cut by four different major-league teams when the players' union went on strike in 1994. His mother couldn't afford her diabetes medication; his parents showed up at Reed's house one night in a car missing one door. Reed crossed the picket line.

At spring training the next year, the returning veterans cursed Reed when they spoke to him at all. Reed persevered, concentrating on his curveball and on the indigent Dominican boy he had befriended while pitching in the Dominican Republic's winter league. He and his wife were trying to adopt the kid. Reed finally stuck with the Mets at the age of 31.

"Rick has come through a lot," Valentine says. "Like so many guys on our team, he's the kind of guy who'd be fine for someone's daughter to bring home and say, 'Hey, this is my guy.' He'd be welcomed in any family."

Time and Reed's thoroughgoing decency have won over his teammates. The 2000 Mets have been a remarkably cohesive bunch since Henderson's exit. There are a few loose cliques—country boys like Turk Wendell, Dennis Cook, Rick White, and Bobby Jones; older, more sophisticated vets and family men like Ventura, Zeile, and shortstop Mike Bordick; the backgammon boys, Benitez, Derek Bell, and Pat Mahomes—but the Mets aren't split into any rigid factions. "What's unique about this team is that on a given road trip, you'll see fifteen guys out together," says Al Leiter, the Mets' pitching ace. "It's not segregated, and that's a good thing. When you go out together, whether a guy's playing good or bad, you feel for him."

Perhaps it's beer, and the pathetic Arizona Diamondbacks, that have kept the Mets sane. After losing one night to the Expos, a dozen Mets—white, black, and Latino, young and old—are inside a jammed karaoke bar on Montreal's Crescent Street, the city's slicker equivalent of Columbus Avenue. These Mets are plenty relaxed; alas, none takes the stage to sing along to "YMCA." The next day, they go out and wallop the Expos.

I TELL BOBBY VALENTINE THAT DURING THE high tension of last year's playoff games, I was impressed that he looked amazingly serene. "It all depends on the TV producer and the director," Valentine snaps. "I have found that the director can cast any light he wants for the image he wants to portray to the TV audience, just by shooting the manager in the dugout during different times. Kind of interesting. If they want to show the manager picking his nose every time he does it, they can do it, they can have it on camera. Or times he's angry or frowning or frustrated, they can do it." Actually, I say, I meant before and after games, during untelevised press conferences and casual interviews, but Valentine keeps going on about the tendencies of the directors of baseball telecasts for various networks.

Not that he's ignoring the papers. "There's a couple of clowns in our market where if I win the World Series, they're going to say that I didn't sweep," Valentine says. "And if we sweep, they'll figure out a reason why we didn't shut everyone out. It's petty, ridiculous."

In one sense, he's right to be worried. Though the Mets have plenty of players who've endured the New York media blitz, some Mets executives are fretting about the newer arrivals. "You don't know if they can handle the pressure," says one Mets boss. "Derek Bell and Mike Hampton didn't do well when they were in the playoffs with Houston; how are they going to perform in the New York playoff atmosphere? And Zeile was one of those Texas Rangers hitters who the Yankees shut down completely. So we don't know how they're going to react."

WHO LET THE DOGS OUT?

Who?
Who? Who? Who? Ahh-who?

Exuberant barks and growls are shaking the locker room in Cincinnati. The Mets had started the day 0-for-September; Dr. Allan Lans, the team shrink, has suddenly appeared and is making his availability for consultation very visible. But a home run in the top of the tenth inning by Zeile has restored the smiles and celebratory beers to the clubhouse. It's hard to distinguish the recorded guttural woofs of the Baha Men's lead singer from those of Mets utility man Lenny Harris, who gets the credit—or blame—for installing this song as the team's new lucky anthem.

Who? Who? Who? Ahh-who?

Perhaps it's another singer, Garth Brooks, who is the real lucky charm. The country megastar played for the Mets during spring training this year, as a charity-fund-raising gimmick. Last night, Brooks phoned Leiter and Robin Ventura from his home in Oklahoma to offer his encouragement during the slump, and the veterans told Brooks to drop by and catch a game sometime. Brooks hopped in his private plane and flew to Cincinnati, strolling into center field during batting practice and surprising the Mets, who greeted him with bear hugs.

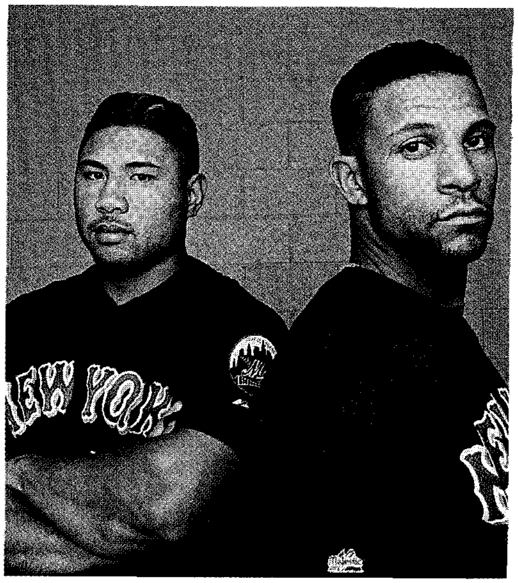
Now Brooks is in the locker room, hollering giddily at Piazza, "You're the man! You're the man!"

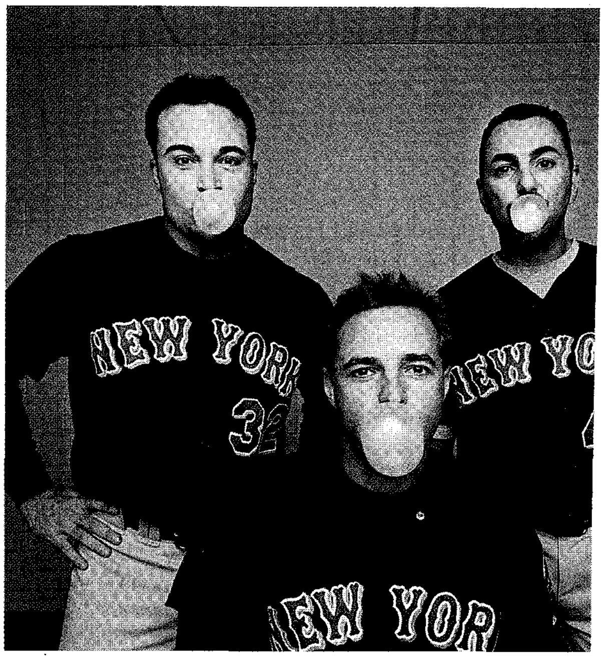
Piazza grins, but his eyes search the floor. He's being praised by one of the biggest stars in the world, but Piazza looks bashful. "Yeah," he says quietly. "I guess. Sometimes."

At times, it's possible to look at the massive Piazza and glimpse the gangly suburban kid who found refuge in baseball and heavy metal. Piazza still regularly cranks up bands like Pantera and King Diamond, and he contributed a "death-metal scream" to his buddy Zakk Wylde's most recent album.

Piazza grew up outside Philadelphia. His childhood, and the strange route he took to a pro contract, helped form Piazza's determination not to stand out. His father, Vince, is a self-made multimillionaire who turned a couple of used cars into a Pennsylvania empire of auto dealerships, a computer-service company, and real-estate holdings. Vince made sure all his children learned how to work hard for a living—when he built a vast mansion atop a hill in Valley Forge, Vince Piazza sent his sons out to break boulders alongside the construction crew—and he was obsessed with turning Mike into a baseball player. Vince built Mike a lighted backyard batting cage, but the father's greatest gift turned out to be his friendship with Tommy Lasorda.

When Piazza went undrafted out of high school, Lasorda steered him to college coaching pals, then engineered a private audition for Piazza at Dodger Stadium in front of the team's head of scouting. Then Piazza earned his way up through the Dodgers system, loading on muscle in the weight room and doing hours of monotonous drills to learn a catcher's footwork. Still, he was regularly taunted as "Tommy's boy."



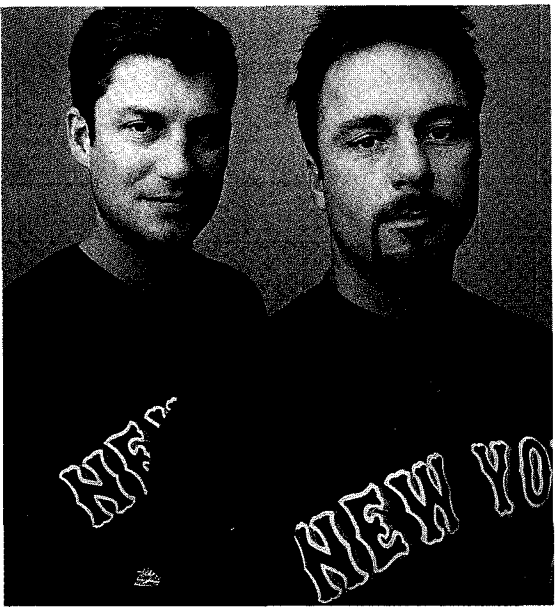


Piazza won the National League Rookie of the Year award with the Dodgers in 1993 and just kept getting better. He loved playing and living in Los Angeles, becoming a hugely popular figure, but he has never worn his stardom on his sleeve. Piazza seems to have internalized all the SoCal laid-back cool during his six seasons in L.A. Though lately he's been dating the Playmate of the Millennium, Darlene Bernaola, he has no use for the standard trappings of celebrity; he's never seen with a "posse," preferring to drive himself around New York. Even as September grew tense, Piazza was his usual affable self, going out of his way to give me the address of an old-school barber in Brooklyn who Piazza says gives the best shave in New York.

Piazza got his playing style in Philadelphia. "As a kid, I really admired the way Mike Schmidt of the Phillies carried himself," Piazza says. "He was always very stoic, very serious. I like to have fun, but for some reason, if I do show emotion on the field, it's impromptu, it's not a lot of fist-pumping. I like to run my home runs out and walk back to the dugout. Little things like that—running out ground balls, things that maybe don't mean a lot but are important to me."

In 1998, a contract dispute ended with the Dodgers' dumping Piazza on the cut-rate Florida Marlins. The Mets pounced, trading for him in May 1998. "Before that, we were a good little team," Steve Phillips says, "and then we became a legitimate contender."

What's unique is that on a road trip, you'll see fifteen guys out together," says Leiter. "It's not segregated, and that's a good thing.”



AROUND THE HORN Clockwise from top left, outfielders Agbayani and Payton; infielders Ventura and Zeile; pitchers Hampton, Leiter, and Franco.

Piazza arrived feeling betrayed by the Dodgers, and when he slumped in September, Mets fans booed viciously, further wounding him. Yet he chose to stay—a new $91 million deal didn't hurt, but he says he cared more about winning with the Mets, and winning over the fans.

This August, Mets fans chanted "MVP!" whenever Piazza, hitting .351, strode to the plate. Then came September. Once again, the drumbeat is sounding about how Piazza fades at the end of a season because of the wear-and-tear of catching. Piazza says he loves catching, but his reluctance to switch positions also has plenty to do with his self-image. The rich man's son, who had a major-league manager for a professional godfather, recoils from anything that looks like special treatment.

"Being a catcher brings him down to everybody's level as just being one of the guys," Robin Ventura says. "He's an amazing hitter, but because he's always blocking balls and getting run over and whacked by foul tips, there's more of a human thing to Mike."

Piazza turned 32 this month, but he talks with the maturity of a much older veteran. Mention his mammoth home run to cap a ten-run comeback against the Braves in June, and Piazza praises the rest of the lineup. "The only reason why I got that opportunity is that Fonzie [Alfonzo] had a great two-strike, two-out hit," he says. "I'm starting to get the idea more and more that great players throughout history and great teams—you're not put in a situation to excel without good teammates. What is Roger Maris without Mickey Mantle, or vice versa? Hank Aaron had Eddie Mathews hitting behind him. I'm not downplaying my own role—but again, look at Schmittie. He had Greg Luzinski."

Last October, after the final loss to the Braves, Piazza, his hands swollen, his knees screaming from seven months of squatting, his brain scrambled by base-running collisions and pitch-calling decisions, couldn't bring himself to take one more team flight. So instead of boarding the Mets' charter out of Atlanta, Piazza went to a rental-car counter. "I wanted a Cadillac, but all they had was a Ford Escort," he says. "Probably a good thing, so I couldn't drive as fast."

He headed west out of Georgia, wandering from interstates to blue highways through Tennessee and Mississippi and down to Pensacola, where he sat on the beach and munched crab legs. "I threw my cell phone away and just drove," he says. "I was burned out, and driving for me is very therapeutic. I was solo, man. Just drove through, ate at diners, truck stops. It was pretty neat."

Piazza is a Civil War buff, so he stopped at Vicksburg. He stared at the battleground where, after a brutal 47-day siege, the Union army, led by Ulysses S. Grant, split the South in one of the war's decisive victories. "Granted there's no comparison between war and baseball," Piazza says. "But I look at these battlefields and think, 'Where did they find the courage to charge when they were outnumbered two-to-one?' And I use it as a way to motivate myself."

BOBBY VALENTINE GOT A LOT OF INK FOR screaming at the Mets after their two losses in Atlanta last week. But a subtler tactic may have helped them win the next night: Valentine moved Todd Zeile into the slot behind Piazza, where Ventura, struggling with the aftereffects of knee and shoulder surgery, had floundered most of the season. That night, both Piazza and Zeile homered in the 6–3 Mets win.

The next day in Philadelphia, the win and his own venting have made Valentine a new man. In the visiting manager's office, his feet up on the desk, he's telling hilarious Sinatra stories and making fun of himself. "No, I was never in the Rat Pack," Valentine says. "I was just a rat."

Al Leiter, the savvy, charmingly demonstrative lefty from New Jersey, who pitched five perfect innings in Atlanta to begin the Mets' mood swing, considers the September strangeness—the batting slumps and losses to awful teams, the end-of-the-world fulminations. Isn't it unbelievable that the Mets are still in position to roar into the playoffs?

Leiter's green eyes dance merrily. He's not hearing any talk of curses or omens or Bill Buckner's revenge.

"Unbelievable?" Leiter says with a laugh. "Nah. It's just baseball."

Mets baseball, that is. Everyone knows Yogi Berra spoke the original most-overused sports cliché: "It ain't over till it's over." Few remember that Yogi said it as manager of the Mets. ■

A BID TOO FAR

Aggressive auction houses are making a grab for a bigger slice of the art pie, especially the piping-hot contemporary market. Can dealers compete in a bubble that produces $1.7 million for porcelain kitsch? Or will everyone take a bath?

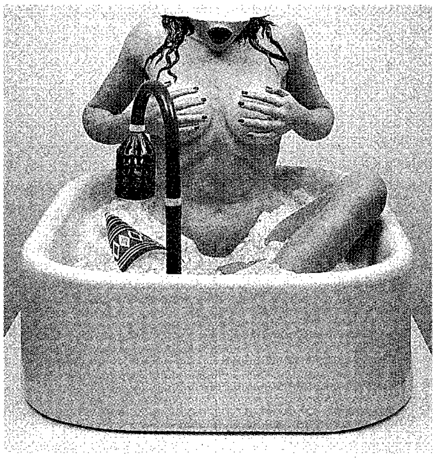
By Christopher Mason

THE SEASON MAY HAVE been something of a fizzle at the beach, but in the art market, it was the longest, hottest summer in years. On a Friday afternoon in August, Michael McGinnis, director of contemporary art for Phillips Auctioneers, sat at his desk in the cramped East 79th Street offices of the upstart, London-based firm surrounded by a mountain of catalogues and artworks in—and out of—packing crates. As five o'clock approached, the newly rich collectors he cultivates were fleeing the city for their art-filled, humidity-controlled beach houses. But McGinnis was doggedly plowing through transparencies of recent works by Matthew Barney, Jeff Koons, and Cindy Sherman—fashionable artists whose works he hopes to sell for record sums at auction this fall. Above all, McGinnis was keenly aware that by the end of summer, he must nail down an impressive array of works for the all-important fall sales, which begin on November 13.

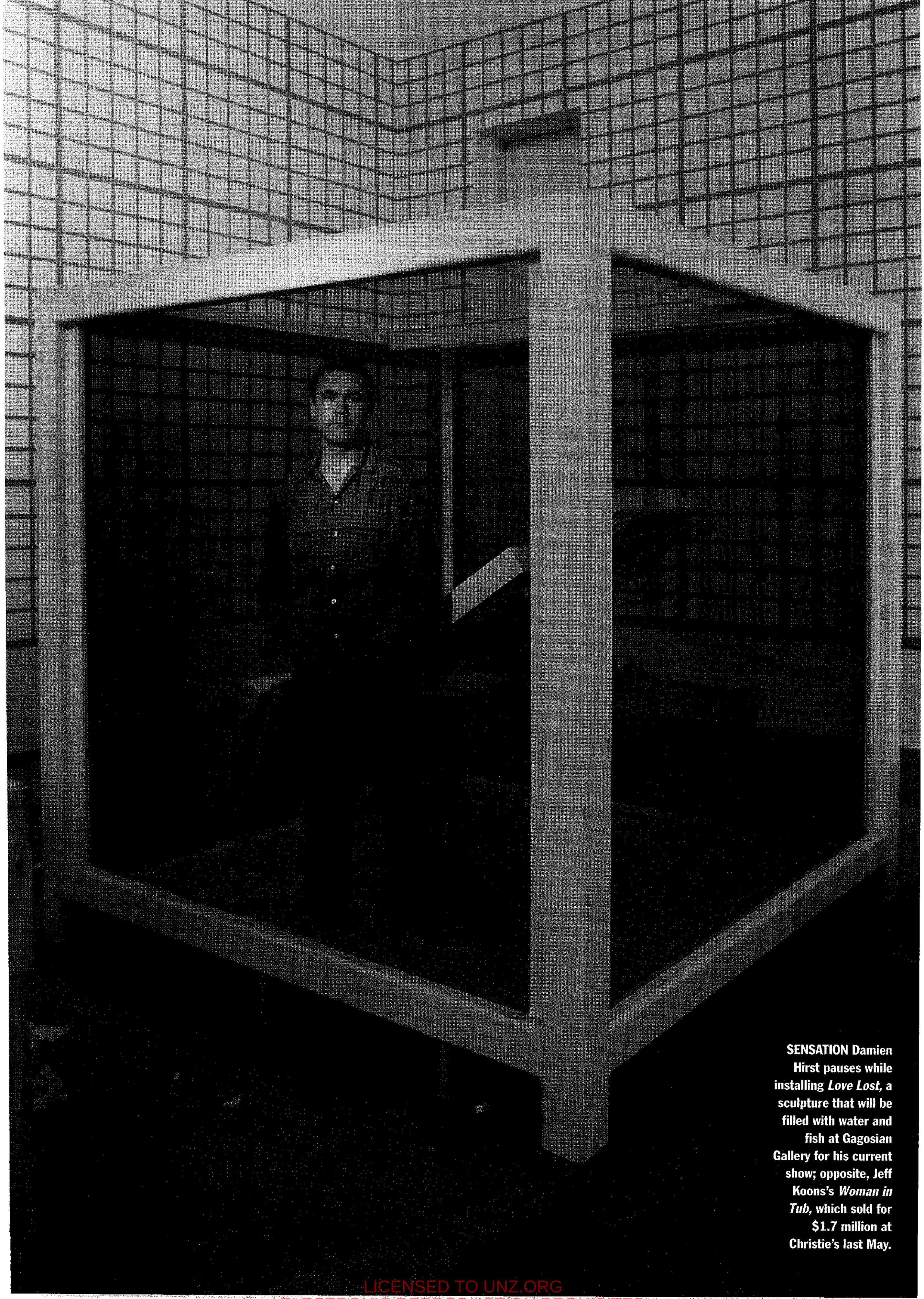
With Phillips as the new wildcard in the 250-year slugfest between Sotheby's and Christie's, the competition has never been more intense. "It's insanity—we're incredibly busy," says McGinnis, a relentlessly cheerful, plump-cheeked 30-year-old who quit Christie's last year to launch Phillips's contemporary department.

And the battle has not been without what the Pentagon calls collateral damage. Dealers once watched from the sidelines as Christie's and Sotheby's duked it out over old masters, Impressionists, and Abstract Expressionists. But to the dealers' horror, the auction houses have moved aggressively in the past two years to seize control of the contemporary-art market. Gallery owners complain that the extravagant prices achieved recently at auction have prompted speculators to buy artists' latest works in galleries, then flip them at Sotheby's, Christie's, or Phillips for a quick profit, inflating the fragile careers of artists the galleries have painstakingly nurtured.

"I think it's reprehensible," says Barbara Gladstone, a prominent Chelsea dealer. "When I see works from 1999 at auction in 2000, my blood boils. These



Photograph by Frank W. Ockenfels 3



SENSATION Damien Hirst pauses while installing *Love Lost,* a sculpture that will be filled with water and fish at Gagosian Gallery for his current show; opposite, Jeff Koons's *Woman in Tub,* which sold for $1.7 million at Christie's last May.

artists are people with careers. It's a reflection of unmitigated greed, and I think it should be regulated."

Gladstone argues that art created in the past decade should be excluded from public auctions—a high-minded proposal that is unlikely to come to pass. "If an artwork is over ten years old, I think, okay—the statute of limitations is up," she says.

"The galleries are the big losers in this game," fumes a prominent SoHo dealer. "When collectors sell work from our gallery at auction, we don't make a dime, and neither does the artist. If the piece does badly at auction, everyone suffers. If the piece does well and we raise our prices to match the auction price, the collectors get angry. And if we don't raise them, the artist feels betrayed—artists are very sensitive—and they threaten to defect to another gallery. It's a no-win situation."

"THE GALLERIES ARE THE BIG LOSERS IN THIS GAME," FUMES A SOHO DEALER. "WE DON'T MAKE A DIME."

Some established collectors also find it in bad taste. "If you put something up at auction, you can hurt the artist's market," says Herbert Schorr, a veteran bi-coastal collector of emerging artists. "To me, if I want to make money, I'll make it in the stock market. But I must admit that I am in a very small minority."

The auction houses plead innocence. "I don't try to encourage people to sell work they just bought last week," says Philippe Ségalot, head of Christie's contemporary-art department, who is more than familiar with such expressions of dealer rage. "But I cannot ignore it, because if I don't take it, they will go to the competition."

The spring 2000 auctions in New York produced record sums for the work of 35 artists including Phillips's, whose first glitzy contemporary evening sale fetched an impressive $11 million. *Out of Sight, Out of Mind*—a 1991 sculpture by Damien Hirst consisting of two severed cattle heads preserved in formaldehyde—sold for a staggering $552,500 at Phillips, a record for the 35-year-old British artist. Bidding was fierce, even though the sculpture itself was stuck in London. A polite salesroom announcement elicited a few chuckles: U.S. Customs was demanding that the purchaser sign an affidavit guaranteeing that Hirst's grisly handiwork would be used solely as an artwork, in order to prevent the potential spread of mad-cow disease. No less remarkably, *Woman in Tub*—an *über*-kitsch 1988 porcelain sculpture by Jeff Koons of a headless woman grabbing her breasts as an intrepid visitor with a snorkel attacks her from the bottom of her bubble bath—sold to an unidentified telephone bidder at Christie's for $1.71 million.

With the fall auction season rapidly approaching, there's no shortage of deep-pocketed collectors with the superior vision required to admire the aesthetics of pickled cows' heads and headless porcelain pornography. And with the spring's high prices egging the auction houses on to score an even bigger autumn, McGinnis and his formidable rivals, Christie's Philippe Ségalot and Sotheby's Tobias Meyer, spent their summers jetting from villa to chalet to dacha to ranch in order to cajole coveted artworks from collectors. To close their deals, the three experts and their various deputies often fly thousands of miles to view a single picture. "It's important to see it firsthand before we make a serious commitment," says McGinnis, who recently flew to Switzerland for the day to visit a collector. "The stakes are high in these auctions, and you have to be 1,000 percent confident that you're going to be able to sell it."

Among the tantalizing contemporary works the three are confident about selling in the fall sales are another Damien Hirst, *In Love/Out of Love*, from 1998, that McGinnis estimates will sell for $400,000 to $600,000. And at Christie's, Philippe Ségalot has lined up Charles Ray's *Male Mannequin*, a sculpture that Christie's describes as "a self-portrait in some sense as the genitalia is anatomically correct and cast from life," which he has estimated at $700,000 to $900,000.

THREE'S A CROWD Clockwise from above, Sotheby's Tobias Meyer, Phillips's Michael McGinnis, and Christie's Philippe Ségalot.

Photographed by Melanie Dunea/CPi.

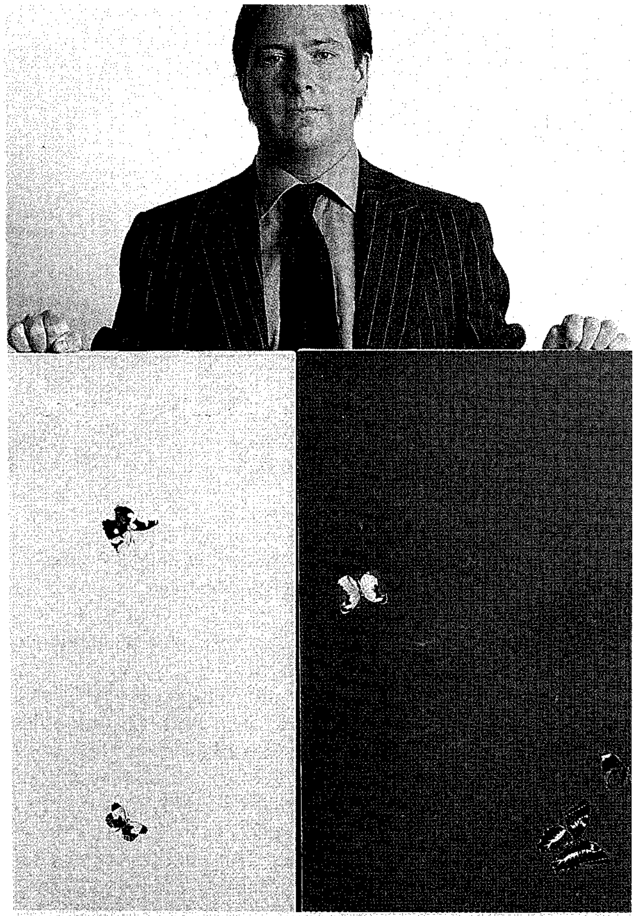
IN GRABBING THE CONTEMPORARY DEALER'S secondary sales, the auction houses are adjusting to a seismic shift in the marketplace and evolving tastes. Impressionist paintings and early-to-mid-twentieth-century artworks have long produced top dollar, but superb examples are increasingly scarce. Most are locked away in museums and private collections, or have become exorbitantly expensive. But newly wrought, contemporary pieces—some on which the paint is barely dry—are in prodigious supply. "Thirty years ago, we were collecting Abstract Expressionists when that was still affordable," Schorr says of his switch to emerging art. "We buy young art," his wife, Lenore, adds. "It's more challenging. It's the thrill of discovery."

In their enthusiasm for these new artists, many ignore the fact that the stratospheric prices being achieved at auction for recently created works are eerily reminiscent of the inflated market of the eighties that immediately preceded the art-world Armageddon of 1990, when prices and confidence plunged. A dismal contemporary auction at Sotheby's in November 1990, where 58 percent of the artworks offered went unsold, remains a painful memory to some.

"Very few people seem to have learned the lessons from the end of the eighties," observes Matthew Marks, a leading

Chelsea dealer who isn't tickled to see the market froth over. "I'm not that old, so I don't see why I can remember it, but so many people old enough to be my parents' age don't."

A cautious skepticism, however, may be hard to maintain in the face of positive market pressure. At Sotheby's evening sale on May 17, a multi-edition photograph created in 1998 by Andreas Gursky sold for $181,750—a record price for the popular German artist, and an astonishing sum given that it was selling in galleries only two years ago for just $30,000.



And it's no secret that Phillips has been offering hefty guarantees and up-front sums to help along a few deaccessions from private collections. Phillips reportedly put up $1.3 million to secure Gerhard Richter's *Apfelbaum* for its May auction—in the form of an outright purchase or a guarantee. It was cheerfully listed in the catalogue with an $800,000–$1.2 million estimate. If the painting had sold in that range, Phillips would have taken a loss. But the market rewarded McGinnis's aggressive tactics when a buyer snapped it up for a $1.5 million hammer price. Not to be outdone, Sotheby's and Christie's have been busy making counteroffers. "To compete for property at this level in such an accelerated market, guarantees are a necessary part of the business," McGinnis notes.

With such inducements, who could resist cashing in? "The auctions make my life more difficult," says Marks, who is Gursky's New York dealer. "If I'm selling works for a fraction of what they could conceivably bring at auction, it's obviously of no interest to me if I sell to someone who's then going to turn around and put it up for auction." So Marks takes the only measures he can. Collectors who dare to indulge in such speculative high jinks are immediately blacklisted from the gallery. To discourage short-term speculators, some influential dealers, including Andrea Rosen, now issue invoices specifying that if the purchaser decides to resell the work, he or she is expected to offer it first through the gallery.

Defending his role in the dust-up, Ségalot notes that he is careful to limit the number of pieces by an individual artist in a sale in order to avoid flooding the market with his or her work, and that he deliberately creates conservative, realistic estimates that will encourage bidding. "We try to care—I mean, we *do* care—about the artists, their market, and about the galleries, et cetera," he says.

The dealers are not the only ones with rising temperatures in this hot market. Collectors, too, are getting frustrated—but with the dealers. Like his competitors, McGinnis notes that the auctions are often the only way that collectors who are passionate about an artist's work can gain access to it. What irks the collectors most is gallery "waiting lists" for work by sought-after artists—often a euphemism for a dealer's refusal to sell the work of an artist to anyone but a museum or a famous collector who can be relied upon to improve the work's provenance.

"I sympathize with the dealers," McGinnis says. "But the reality is that we provide a service to consumers who are looking for work perhaps created last year. If they can't get it anywhere else, and if we can source it for them and sell it successfully, I think it's our obligation."

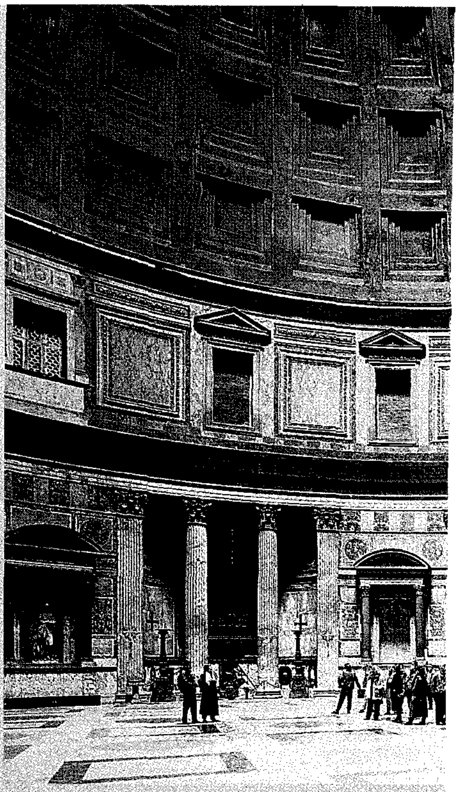
At Sotheby's, a couple of works created in 1999 showed up in the auction house's day sale on May 18, both selling for sums comfortably above their high estimates—a simple oil portrait of a yellow-and-green-eyed woman by Vanessa Beecroft for $9,600 and a small etching of a hand by Robert Gober for $2,280. But Tobias Meyer downplays the importance of such works at Sotheby's. "It's definitely not a market that I consciously run after," he says.

MEYER'S RELUCTANCE TO pursue works of such recent vintage is partly due to the fact that Sotheby's—unlike Christie's—continues to define "contemporary" as work from 1945 to the present. During the past two years, Sotheby's has achieved several records for work created in the past decade. But given that the prices over $1 million in Sotheby's recent sale were generated by classic works, Meyer is more motivated to sell blue-chip contemporary items such as a late-forties abstract canvas by Clyfford Still or a sixties Warhol.

Two years ago, Christie's caused a major ripple in the art world by launching a new department for work created since

MULTIPLE EXPOSURE

Collectors don't want a piece that's unique; they'd rather have one that's in MoMA.



THE ART FORMERLY KNOWN AS PRINTS Thomas Struth's Cibachrome print *Pantheon.*

ONE OF THE MOST ASTONISHING aspects of the recent auctions of contemporary art is the stratospheric prices now being paid for multiple-edition photographs. "In some cases, they're commanding higher prices than unique works," observes Barbara Gladstone, "and that's truly inexplicable. By any standard, it doesn't make sense."

At Christie's evening sale on May 16, gasps were audible in the packed saleroom when *Pantheon*—a 1992 Cibachrome print from an edition of ten by German photographer Thomas Struth—sold for $270,000, three times its high estimate and a record sum for a contemporary photograph. The image originally sold in galleries for $30,000, meaning an 800 percent profit (minus 10 percent commission) for the anonymous seller.

The following evening at Sotheby's, *Plank Piece I-II*—a 1973 photographic diptych by Charles Ray showing a figure wedged against a wall by a wooden plank, from an edition of seven—sold for a staggering $368,750.

"Uniqueness no longer has the same cachet," observes Amy Cappellazzo, a well-connected art adviser and curator based in Miami. "You'd think that a unique artwork like a painting would be a much hotter commodity. But today, if a photograph is in a museum or a major collection, it immediately becomes more desirable. If it's an edition of six, say, and three are in museums, they basically serve as a highly successful marketing strategy for pieces that come up on the open market."

In the status-conscious world of contemporary collecting, multiples can be irresistible to those who have only recently begun to satisfy a lust for acquisition. "A lot of the new collectors find it interesting to buy in edition," says Tobias Meyer, head of contemporary art worldwide for Sotheby's, "because they can say they just bought a piece that's in the Museum of Modern Art. Not a piece that's similar but the *same,* identical image."

Philippe Ségalot, head of Christie's contemporary art, notes that the newfound popularity of multiples also applies to bronzes in the Impressionist and Modern sales, where sculptures by Picasso and Matisse are fetching unprecedented prices. "For a long time, people wouldn't buy them because they're in editions," he says. "But today, it reassures them to know that it is in a prominent collection. It's incredible—what used to be a problem has become an advantage."

"Photography is the hottest component of the art market right now," notes John Wessel, a partner in the Wessel + O'Connor gallery in Chelsea. "There's a lot of young people buying it because they're the first generation with major financial resources to grow up without the distinction between photography and fine art. They don't make that separation, especially when the photos are as big as the paintings!"

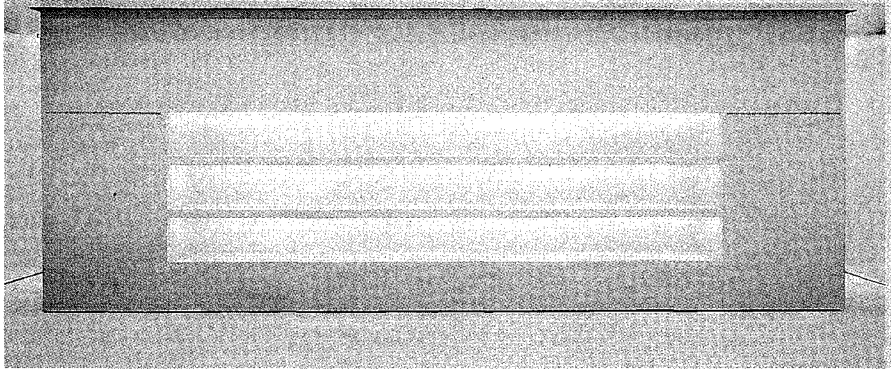
Size is important. "The techniques that artists like Thomas Struth and Andreas Gursky are using to create very large photographs are relatively new," Ségalot says. "I hate to say this, but the size is probably a big reason why these works speak to such a wide audience."

Many of the photographs fetching extravagant prices deal with fashionable post-Warhol themes like the context and commercialization of art and the seduction of marketing. *Prada III,* a digitally manipulated 1998 photograph by Gursky, epitomizes this theme. The auction catalogue reverentially notes that "the frontal presentation of the architecture, with its simple geometry and subtle, contrasting hues, reads like an iconic object of worship, a secular shrine to consumer culture." In November, Christie's will offer *Prada II*—a sweater-free version estimated at $120,000 to $180,000.

More distressing, some new collectors are bidding furiously for perishable pieces that may fade and vanish within their lifetime. The techniques developed for these large-scale works remain untested and unstable. "We haven't perfected this medium, by any stretch of the imagination," observes Marianne Boesky, a Chelsea dealer. "But people just don't care. They're living for the moment."

The Museum of Modern Art, however, is taking no chances. "In the eighties, we established a policy that when we add works in fugitive color materials to the collection, we try to acquire two identical prints," says Peter Galassi, chief curator of photography at MOMA. Since certain color photographs will shift in the dark even at normal temperatures, he says, they are kept cool and

SHOP ART Andreas Gursky's *Prada II,* a photograph up for auction at Christie's this November.



dry in art vaults.

"We make it plain to the artist," Galassi says, "that we see it not as two duplicates, one of which could eventually be disposed of, but as a single work of art with a longer life."

With photographs selling for extravagant sums at auction, museum curators are now under intense pressure to identify in advance works of lasting art-historical merit in artists' studios and galleries and to snap them up before they reach the secondary market, where buying two images would be prohibitively expensive. "If you bought a picture at auction, you wouldn't be able to do this," Galassi admits.

Unlike in the market of the eighties, when collectors often paid top dollar for the work of hot artists indiscriminately, neglecting to pay attention to quality, collectors today tend to be much more selective and informed. "People know faster and faster which are the most desirable works by a specific artist," Ségalot notes. "*Pantheon* is one of the best images by Thomas Struth. And it is very difficult to find this piece. It's in very good collections, and it's unlikely to be sold. So when you have a work like that at auction, even if you know you have to pay a premium to get it, that is probably the only way to get it."

But Matthew Marks, Gursky's dealer, wonders whether the current prices at auction indicate a madness that may not be sustainable. "For an artist to achieve these $200,000 prices for editioned work, they have to be among the most important artists of their time," he says. "And it's unlikely that all of them can be."

1970, challenging the definition of what constitutes contemporary art. It was a cunning scheme to attract new, younger buyers—and an instant success. The first sale, in June 1998, was 100 percent sold and produced twelve record prices for Gerhard Richter, Sigmar Polke, and Dan Flavin totaling $16.2 million—way above Christie's $12.6 million high estimate.

For all the hue and cry over Christie's bold move, it was actually Sotheby's that got the ball rolling a year earlier with a landmark sale in May 1997, when Meyer took up the gavel for the first time in New York after his appointment as head of contemporary art worldwide.

That sale included eleven artworks consigned by the Boston Children's Heart Foundation—an intriguing and unlikely source. The collection had been assembled by Dr. Bernardo Nadal-Ginard, a Boston cardiologist with a superb eye for contemporary art who had recently gone to jail for dipping into the nonprofit medical foundation's funds to treat himself to works by trendy artists such as Kiki Smith, Jeff Koons, Matthew Barney, and Robert Gober.

"The quality was unbelievably high," Meyer recalls. "So I decided to put the contemporary works at the beginning of the evening, which was a first. People didn't anticipate them to do so well, but they did."

One of the most fought-for items was Kiki Smith's sculpture of a hunched, seated woman urinating. It sold to the London dealer Anthony D'Offay for $233,500—nearly three times its high estimate and a record for the artist. Sotheby's 1997 triumph may have hastened Christie's decision to create its post-1970 department, but the latter firm has wasted no time since in aggressively marketing itself as the ultimate venue for buying and selling recent art. Indeed, Christie's found a new lease on life when contemporary-art collector and hard-charging French luxury-goods tycoon François Pinault bought the firm in 1998. Much of the effort has been led by Philippe Ségalot, the 37-year-old Frenchman who became head of contemporary art for Christie's worldwide in the fall of 1998, when works by Gober, Jean-Michel Basquiat, and Cindy Sherman were on the block.

Ségalot's successes have administered a spectacular jolt to the careers of certain artists, most notably Jeff Koons—the eighties art star who dropped out of the public spotlight in the early nineties amid a harrowing custody battle over Ludwig, the son he had with his ex, Italian porn star–politician Ilona "Cicciolina" Staller, whose nickname translates as "little pot of flesh." Denied custody, Koons spent much of his time during the nineties traveling back and forth to Rome in order to visit his son, perhaps regretting the numerous explicit and multi-edition porcelain sculptures he had created in 1991 depicting himself naked with Cicciolina *flagrante delicto* in a memorable variety of positions.

Last November, collectors and dealers arriving for the first contemporary preview at Christie's glamorous new headquarters at Rockefeller Center were startled to encounter actors prancing about in Pink Panther costumes as rock music blared. More than a cheap party gimmick, the kitsch costumes were intended to promote the imminent sale of Koons's *Pink Panther,* a porcelain sculpture of a seminude blonde hugging the cartoon character, which was also pictured on the cover of the catalogue.

While some found the costumed high jinks entertaining, others were not so amused. "It was so tacky," recalls a well-known SoHo dealer. "It was the most hyped-up thing."

SOME MAY GRUMBLE, BUT Christie's effective boldfaced promotion was entirely in the spirit of the rampant commercialism so expertly exploited in the work of Koons—a former Wall Street commodities trader whose art provocatively advertises itself as a commodity by invoking the everyday kitsch of soft porn, kids' toys, rock music, film stills, and TV. Created in 1988, *Pink Panther* is part of Koons's celebrated "Banality" series, which inspired admiring and furious reviews when it was first exhibited at Sonnabend in December that year. Hilton Kramer, the arch-conservative critic, called the show "nothing but a recycling of kitsch taste for jaded sophisticates." As such, it may have been just the ticket for its well-heeled audience.

"Philippe is smart, and he's made it fun," says a SoHo dealer, speaking of the new direction of contemporary auctions at Christie's. "The art is cutting-edge, and the parties are fun. It's a social appointment twice a year, and people come for the auctions even if they're not going to buy. But I think it's also kind of a joke. It's bored rich people looking for excitement. It's decadent."

To widespread astonishment, *Pink Panther* sold for $1.8 million to an anonymous telephone bidder at Christie's evening sale on November 16 after intense bidding among five collectors. That staggering sum was more than twice the auction house's high estimate of $800,000 and more than quadruple Koons's previous auction record of $409,500.

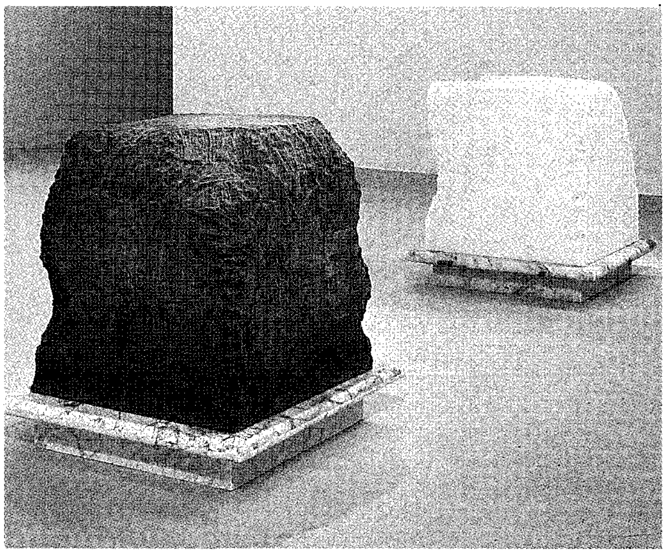
"Privately, it could never have brought that price," notes a young dealer who was involved in consigning *Pink Panther* to Christie's.

"When I priced *Pink Panther* for $600,000 to $800,000, they told me I was crazy," Ségalot says, chuckling. "Then it sold for $1.8 million, and that allowed us to get more for the next sale."

No kidding. On the strength of his success with *Pink Panther,* Ségalot managed to line up a total of five Koons pieces for Christie's next evening sale on May 16, led by the spectacularly garish *Woman in Tub.*

Christie's went to extraordinary lengths to galvanize interest in *Woman in Tub,* throwing a "Bubble Bash" theme party for 900 guests with dimmed lighting and a disco beat on May 15, the night before the sale. Again, the Christie's hype appears to have paid off. After intense bidding among four contenders, including dealer Larry Gagosian, *Woman in Tub* sold to an unidentified telephone bidder for $1.71 million.

LARD FOR LARD'S SAKE Janine Antoni's *Gnaw,* a work consisting of two 600-pound blocks, one chocolate, one lard, gnawed by the artist.



"THE AUCTION HOUSES BRING A WIDER AUDIENCE, AND KIND OF SEXY. BUT THERE'S A LOT MORE INTERES

"The big question is, who's paying $1.8 million and $1.7 million for Jeff Koons at Christie's?" says a leading SoHo dealer. "Nobody knows. The big suspicion is that it's Pinault himself."

Such widespread speculation is fed by a couple of factors: As the owner of Christie's, Pinault stands to gain mightily from the buzz generated by Christie's high sales results, and the diminutive Frenchman—a prodigious collector of contemporary art—is known to be a fan of Koons's work. And earlier this year, he paid $3 million for Koons's *Speed Rocker,* a 40-foot-tall sculpture—half-pony, half-dinosaur—abloom with 75,000 plants, which was on view this summer in the Papal Palace in Avignon, France.

Ségalot is keen to put such speculation to rest. "Everyone thinks to the contrary, but Mr. Pinault didn't buy *any* of the Koonses offered at Christie's," he says, clearly exasperated. "It's funny that now every strong price is associated with him, you know? But I can tell you very firmly, and very honestly, that is not the case."

So who *is* the mystery purchaser? The dealer involved with consigning *Pink Panther* points to Peter Brandt, the controversial tycoon and former publisher of *Art in America*. Ségalot refuses to confirm or deny that Brandt is the purchaser, and he is similarly tight-lipped about *Woman in Tub*.

Despite the hype and glory Christie's has achieved with its recent-contemporary sales, Tobias Meyer currently has no intention of creating a post-1970 sale at Sotheby's.

"When you see it as a business, the money is in the classic contemporary works," Meyer says, referring to multi-million-dollar works by artists such as Jackson Pollock, Jasper Johns, and Andy Warhol. "With the young art—I call it the spice of the sale—you can get very high prices for certain things *if* the quality's great. You can create a certain buzz, but it's not the meat and bones of the market."

Meyer points out that the record $14.3 million achieved for Rothko's *Yellow Over Purple* at Sotheby's most recent contemporary evening sale is roughly the same as the $14.4 million total for all 50 works sold at Christie's the previous evening.

Given the enormous expenses involved—staffing a separate department, extensive international travel to secure artworks, and color catalogues that are costly to produce and send—it is hard to imagine that either Christie's or Phillips is making much of a profit on its contemporary sales.

DESPITE HER ANIMUS TOWARD the auction houses, Barbara Gladstone acknowledges that there is a silver lining. The widely publicized triumphs of the auctions can translate into increased public interest and more business in the galleries. "They bring a wider audience," she says, referring to the auction houses, "because it's exciting and kind of sexy, all that money." Even so, she says, "there's a lot more interest in the money being spent than there is in the art."

Infatuation with art at auction doesn't necessarily translate into business elsewhere, however. Many dealers are frustrated that new collectors often seem oblivious of the galleries, preferring instead to buy in the charged atmosphere of the auction room.

"I met some people this spring who, much to my complete amazement, went to the auctions and paid five times what they should have for a piece, then chose to come visit the galleries the day after," Matthew Marks recalls.

"They very nicely purchased a similar piece from me at a fraction of what they'd paid at auction, so I just mumbled something about how I hoped they weren't going to make a habit of it, and that next time they might want to come visit the gallery the day *before* the auctions. But they didn't seem bothered by any of it.

"I think they just have a lot of money and they're enjoying themselves," he adds with a sigh. "But as a dealer, you want to throw yourself off a bridge when you see these people going at it in the salesroom."

Few things are more vexing to a dealer than the spectacle of collectors bidding extravagantly for a multi-edition work when an identical piece is sitting in their gallery, available for a fraction of the auction price. *Winterthur 1992,* a small landscape photograph from an edition of ten by Thomas Struth, sold for $45,825 in the Christie's day sale on May 17. Eight blocks north at the Marian Goodman gallery, however, it was available for $20,000—less than half of the Christie's price.

"I think the people who go to auction ought to come to the gallery first and take a look!" says Goodman, the legendary 57th Street dealer, who has represented Struth since the late eighties.

Strange as it seems, such discrepancies are commonplace. "If someone wants to

Photograph by Frank W. Ockenfels 3.

pay three times the price, that's up to them—they're welcome," says Antonio Homem, the director of Sonnabend gallery, now located on West 22nd Street. "Maybe it's just the price one pays for ignorance," he adds.

Like other dealers, Homem is indignant about collectors who think nothing of paying exorbitant sums in an auction salesroom but who then have the gall to try to nickel-and-dime dealers when visiting the galleries. Recently, he recalls, a collector who paid a wildly inflated price at auction came to the gallery and inquired about a comparable piece. "This person who had paid ten times the price said, 'How much does your artist cost?' " Homem recalls. "I mentioned the price, and he said, 'Will you give me a discount?' "

And when works soar in price at auction, it inevitably presents dealers with a delicate problem: whether to raise the price of an artist's work in the gallery. To Barbara Gladstone's dismay, *Where Does It All End?,* a small wax sculpture by Sarah Lucas that is a cast of the artist's mouth with a cigarette, somehow inspired a winning bid of £37,600—$55,500—at Christie's contemporary sale in London on June 27.

"I sold it for a thousand dollars in 1995 when it was new, but that's only five years ago," Gladstone says. "I don't know how you could arrive at that number," she adds. "It has its own life, this auction market. And I don't think the auctioneers know much more about it than the rest of us."

PUPPY LOVE Jeff Koons posing inside *Puppy,* the 43-foot-tall flower-covered sculpture that sat in Rockefeller Center as a summer counterpart to the famed Christmas tree.

Even though Lucas's sculpture sold for 55 times its original gallery price, Gladstone claims she has no intention of hiking prices for new work. "I don't think the primary market should be affected by the secondary market," she says. "The primary market has to exercise sanity and restraint. The artist and I are responsible for what we feel is a sane number. And it has to be based on something real. Because we're not irrational. The marketplace may be irrational, but we're not."

ARBARA GLADSTONE SAYS, "BECAUSE IT'S EXCITING
N THE MONEY BEING SPENT THAN THERE IS IN THE ART."

"People come up to you and say, 'I hear you sold a medicine cabinet for £500,000,' " Damien Hirst says. "And I say, 'I sold it for £500 [in the gallery] and only got half that.' "

"The gallery has an ongoing relationship and responsibility to the artist, and the auction house is there to sell what's in demand, which is changing all the time," observes Marian Goodman. "But the problem is that artists get judged because they can't sustain an inflated price. The artist hopes to have a long career, and you're not looking to make a killing. It gets really bad when you feel like an artist is losing his chance to survive by having the auctions overload his market. There's no artist that can stand up to that."

Sometimes, of course, a dealer is happy to see an auction sale boost the reputation of an artist. Sandra Gering was delighted that *Gnaw,* a piece comprising two 600-pound lumps of chocolate and lard literally gnawed by Janine Antoni, put the conceptual artist on the map when Christie's sold it for $204,000 to dealer Lucy Mitchell-Innes, bidding on behalf of the Museum of Modern Art.

The conventional wisdom, Hirst concedes, is that "the auction market trickles down into the primary market. It's a bit like Prada being upset by things selling in thrift stores." Or perhaps that's the other way around.

And yet even a star like Hirst is pessimistic about his fate in the auctions. "I haven't had much bad experience in the auction world," he says. "But I'm sure it's inevitable." ▬

Best

Stiletto king **Manolo Blahnik**, hitting Manhattan for just 24 hours, **brings the city to heel.** By Vanessa Grigoriadis

in Shoe

NORMALLY, IT WOULD BE CONSIDERED rude to pull off a shoe in a group of strangers and present it for ogling and caresses. Yet Carolina Herrera Jr., the petite first daughter of the bouffanted designer, slips easily out of a navy Blahnik at a party in her mother's Madison Avenue store. "Whenever I can, I take a pair from the smallest model in my mom's show," she giggles, tracing the embossed *CH* on the toe with a delicate finger. "I'm an eight—usually the models are nines, but I get foot pads. You manage."

A few champagne flutes away from the junior Herrera—past several dozen women teetering in their very own Blahniks, beyond a lippy Melanie Griffith embracing a bejeweled Ivana Trump—Manolo Blahnik, shoe designer, covers his face in mock horror. "They're my shoes, yet everyone is constantly taking them off and giving them to me like I never saw them before," he says in a low-pitched drawl that comes across more as deep South than English-as-a-fourth-language. "It's on your foot, eh? I don't want to touch it!"

Sipping from a glass of passion fruit and vodka the exact same color as his chartreuse suit—"All this black, boring"—the 57-year-old Blahnik is hard to miss, yet recognized by few. His appearances in New York are brief and rare: Last week, he was here for only 24 hours to promote his new coffee-table book, a tome from HarperCollins filled with Blahnik family photos, illustrations of shoes, and whimsical anecdotes (he made tiny shoes for his pet monkey as a child). The son of a Spanish mother and Czech father who brought him up on the family banana plantation in the Canary Islands, Blahnik relocated to London in his twenties and doesn't like to leave Europe. "New York for me is in-and-out," he explains. "It's not my favorite city."

Yet Blahnik's name here is synonymous with fancy feet, and those devotees in possession of a pair consider Blahniks to be much more than a shoe. "They can make an ugly foot look beautiful," says Ivana's boyfriend, Roffredo Gaetani, while he circulates at the Herrera party. "Mostly, women's feet are ugly." The choice of socialites and movie stars and anyone else who can afford a pair (they average a steep $500), Blahniks appear almost daily on the feet of the fabulous in newspaper columns, weekly on the feet of the wicked in *Sex and the City*, and—one time only, one hopes—as Jennifer Aniston's wedding shoes. Madonna said they're "as good as sex, but last longer."

"That quote!" shrieks Blahnik, shaking his head maniacally. "I'm going to have to put it on my tombstone with all the times I've heard it. I am so *bored* with it."

Blahnik, however, is never truly bored. When he is at rest, a rare occurrence, it is impossible to miss the excellent cut of his suit, the embroidered *MB* on his starched shirt, the way his white hair is parted in the middle and slicked back to meet in a neat "v" at his nape. Once he starts to speak, however, everything is rolled eyes, sibilant *s*'s, hands aflight. "I am a serious person," he confides. "But I am a little flaky too."

As he always does when he's in New York, this trip Blahnik stayed at the St. Regis, right around the corner from his midtown shop. He was accompanied everywhere by George Malkemus, his blue-eyed cherub of a business partner, who is also on hand to answer questions like "Where are my glasses?," "Do you have my camera?," and "Can I have a cinnamon mint?" And he's got the choicest stories.

"In San Francisco," says Malkemus, "we had to have lunch with the best customer of Manolo's shoes at the Neiman Marcus store: an 80-year-old woman—"

"I said, 'No, no, no—' " cries Blahnik, one hand over his eyes. "I could not believe *this* could be the woman!"

"She takes off her shoe and plunks it on the table, telling us she drank champagne out of the sole," says George. "So Manolo gets very excited over her, and says 'Oh, Tallulah Bankhead!,' and she says, 'No, Perrier-Jouët!' " He dissolves into giggles.

"They are always asking me to sign the shoes, too," says Manolo, making a wide curlicue in the air. "One time I signed 23,000 pairs one day—"

"No," protests George. "We *sold* $23,000 in shoes that day."

"No, stupid!" cries Manolo.

"Well, okay," says George, pursing his lips. "I'm just the one who takes care of the dollars. I'm the money man."

"I," Manolo says often, "am the shoe man."

It's this rôle of shoe man that Blahnik has been asked to play the following morning, on a special Fashion Week edition of *The View*. The 9 A.M. call for Blahnik at ABC's studios was early for him, but the shoe models had already been there for a couple hours, and as they walked up and down the hallway in various states of almost-dressed it was evident that most of them hailed from that not very fashionable division of modeldom: the plus size.

Blahnik sweeps into the studio with Malkemus and immediately darts into his dressing room. "Oh, you've got to be kidding," he says, covering his mouth to laugh. "*These* are the models?"

"This is T.V., Manolo," explains Malkemus, pursing his lips yet again. "This is Middle America."

The producer sits down with Blahnik for a run-through. "I want you to be Manolo Blahnik," says the producer.

"I am Manolo Blahnik," says Blahnik.

"Sure," admits the producer. "But I want you to *be* Manolo Blahnik."

Blahnik throws up his hands. "All right," he says.

Star Jones appears, wearing only Lycra leggings and a leopard-print camisole. "Omigod, I just met the man of my dreams," she cries, embracing Blahnik.

"Are you Italian?" asks Barbara Walters; upon hearing that he's not, she runs off: "Joy! Joy! I told you he was Spanish!"

Finally everyone clears out, and the models enter Blahnik's dressing room to put on his shoes. "This is all so primitive," says Blahnik. "No place for these girls to change?" Once they start lacing up or slipping on, however, his attitude changes.

"Look how fabulous this girl looks!" he exclaims, pointing at a woman in over-the-knee black boots. "Like Julia Roberts! Honey, the nineties are back!"

"Oh, sweetie, your first time in those shoes?" he asks a woman teetering in a pair of his four-inch-high satin stilettos. "You poor thing, they must hurt."

Then he turns his attention to a denim shoe with oversize oblong pearls jiggling on the front. "I made it eleven, twelve, twenty years ago—I don't know—and we sell one every single day, who knows why, cluck-cluck-cluck with the pearls all the time," he says. He waves a hand in the air. "I am so *bored* with this shoe." ■

Photographed by Kristine Larsen

THE *COWBOY*

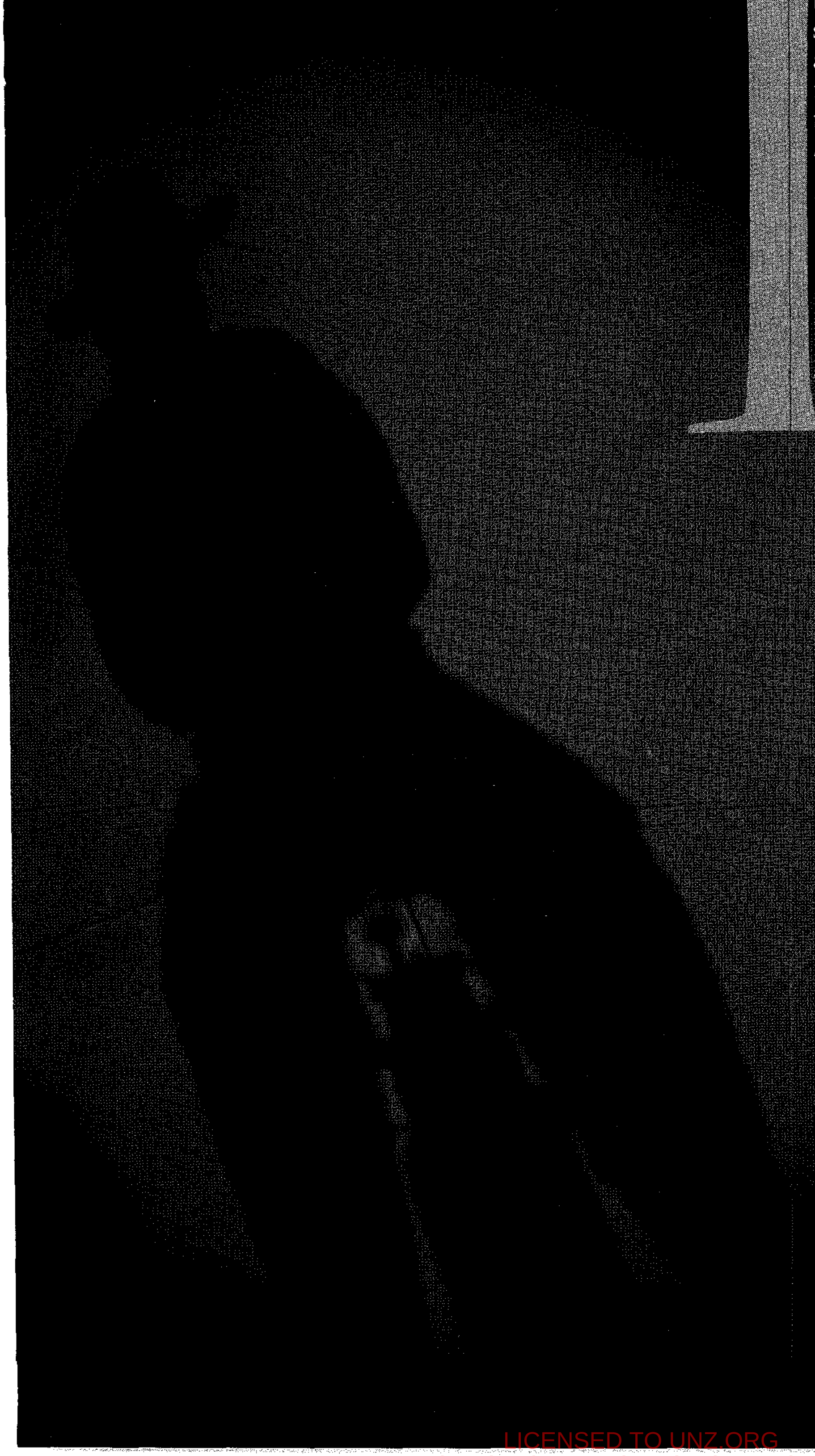
Twenty years after riding a mechanical bull to big-screen fortune and fame, the urban cowboy returns as a stage hero—and the author finds that putting on a show isn't anything like they say it is in the movies.

BY AARON LATHAM

BACK IN THE SADDLE, AGAIN Aaron Latham rides the mechanical bull onstage in Gloucester, Mass., in June.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY NUBAR ALEXANIA

CHRONICLES



I

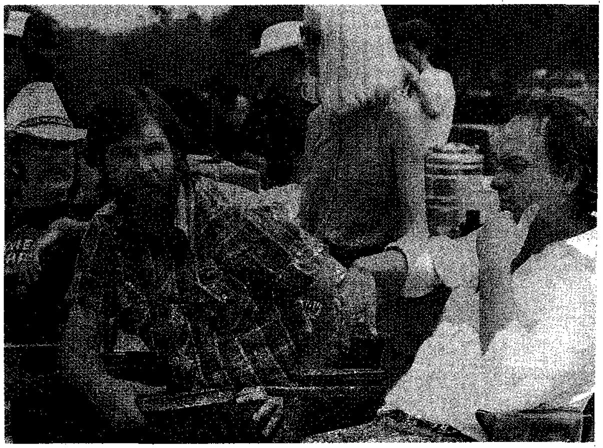
AN OVERTURE

I GOT A LETTER OUT OF THE VOID FROM somebody named Phillip Oesterman, asking if I would like to try to turn my movie *Urban Cowboy* into a Broadway musical. • Of course, it wasn't really *my* movie. It was John Travolta and Debra Winger's movie, and director Jim Bridges's movie. But I was co-author of the screenplay, which was based on a magazine story I'd written in 1978 for Clay Felker at *Esquire* magazine called "The Ballad of the Urban Cowboy: America's Search for True Grit." Set in a huge honky-tonk in Houston, the piece told the story of an unusual love triangle: a girl, a boy, and a mechanical bull. The boy's problem was that the girl could ride the bull better than he could. Soon after the tale was published, Hollywood started calling. So many people wanted to buy it that I was able to get first crack at writing the script. Before long, I was taking transcontinental flights to that cruel city that had abused the talents of Fitzgerald and Faulkner (but was nice to me). • When the movie came out, I heard myself saying in lots of interviews that the cowboy is the only truly mythic figure that America had created so far. He comes to the fore in the culture, then he recedes for a time, but he always seems to reemerge when we're uncertain about the future. • Now, some twenty years later, I found myself hoping that what was true for the culture might also prove to be true for the individual (namely, me). For at the moment, I was uncertain about my own future. As it happens, I'd always thought *Urban Cowboy* would make a good musical—as Rodgers and Hammerstein demonstrated, Broadway musicals and cowboys were made for each other—but I hadn't done anything about it.

AND IT LOOKED AS IF I NEVER would: I promptly misplaced Phil's letter until, a couple of months later at my wife's urging, I dug it up and made the call. Phil—a Texan, like me—turned out to be a Broadway veteran who, through a lifelong association with director and choreographer Tommy Tune, had helped launch such shows as *My One and Only, Grand Hotel,* and *The Will Rogers Follies.*

I suggested lunch. That was fine with Phil. We agreed to meet at his apartment, which is at the end of a long corridor on the ninth floor of a building on West 42nd Street. I showed up feeling wary, hopeful, and hungry. Phil suggested we talk on the roof. I followed him up film-noirish stairs to a sunny rooftop garden in full bloom. We sat down at a picnic table, joined by his partner, Nakies Constantinou, beneath a large umbrella. Oddly, there was no sign of lunch. Our meeting consisted of a two-hour, no-calorie conversation, during which Phil grilled me on my taste in Broadway shows (and found it wanting) and we agreed to collaborate on writing *Urban Cowboy* for the musical stage. Then he took me to an apartment across the hall to introduce me to our choreographer. Melinda Roy—Lindy—had been a star of the New York City Ballet until a knee injury cut her career short at 30. We didn't have a script or a producer or any money, but we had a choreographer. I left West 42nd Street puzzled by Phil. What was he really like? *Who was he?* Why hadn't we eaten?

I WAS 55 YEARS OLD **and had just published a book about my father that everybody said was going to be a best-seller. It wasn't. I was more than ready to welcome the cowboy back into my life.**



And I couldn't help thinking of Jim Bridges, who taught me how to write screenplays. When I showed Jim my initial attempt at a script for *Urban Cowboy,* he politely informed me that most screenplays are not written in the past tense. Then we moved into an office on the Paramount lot, a big room with one desk and two typewriters. His was an IBM Selectric, and I pounded a Royal manual upright straight out of *The Front Page.* Sometimes I would wake up in the middle of the night and write a scene. The next morning, I would show Jim my pages. Then he would show me the pages *he'd* written in the middle of the night. And the dialogue would always be the same. Only his typing was better.

Jim died of cancer in 1993, and I have been looking for a replacement ever since—as my collaborator, as my best friend, as my mentor. Could Phil be the one? By now I was 55 years old and had just published a book about my father that everybody said was going to be a best-seller. It wasn't. I tried teaching but didn't like that. There had been other personal disappointments as well. I was more than ready to welcome the cowboy back into my life.

ACT ONE

A FEW DAYS AFTER OUR FIRST MEETING, I returned to West 42nd Street with another novice effort, this time at writing for the musical stage. Phil looked over my dozen or so pages.

"You can't get there from here," he said.

"What are you talking about?!" I retorted, nervously.

"Well, in this scene, you have Bud falling off a refinery tower," Phil explained calmly. "And in the very next scene you have him taking a bath. Not even Harry Houdini could make that costume change. You just can't get *there* from *here.*"

No splicing scenes together in the editing room. Getting it, I felt a little better.

Day after day, we met in Phil's apartment because he had to smoke. His living room had a high ceiling with huge greenhouse windows overlooking the 42nd Street police station. Two cats, Jasmine and Pali, patrolled his property. Phil worked in a T-shirt, shorts, and bedroom slippers while I wore blue jeans and cowboy boots. He suggested taking two or even three scenes from the movie and turning them into one. Instead of having, say, six scenes taking place around the mechanical bull, we compressed them into three. And he kept saying: "The more surreal, the better."

As we talked, I took notes in longhand. Then I typed the new ideas into a computer version of the growing script. It was good just to be writing again, and I felt optimistic. I enjoyed my reunion with characters who hadn't aged while I had gotten a couple of decades older. Phil continued to articulate and elucidate the differences between musicals and movies, the principal one being this: In a movie, a character can almost never say what he or she really means. If he does, it's called being "too on the nose." Filmmakers hate that. They want to say it without saying it. You don't have the hero say: "I love you." You have him say instead: "You have nice eyes."

Musicals are just the opposite. If you want characters to say what they really mean, what they really feel, you have them sing a song. The song expresses what's inside their hearts, inside their souls.

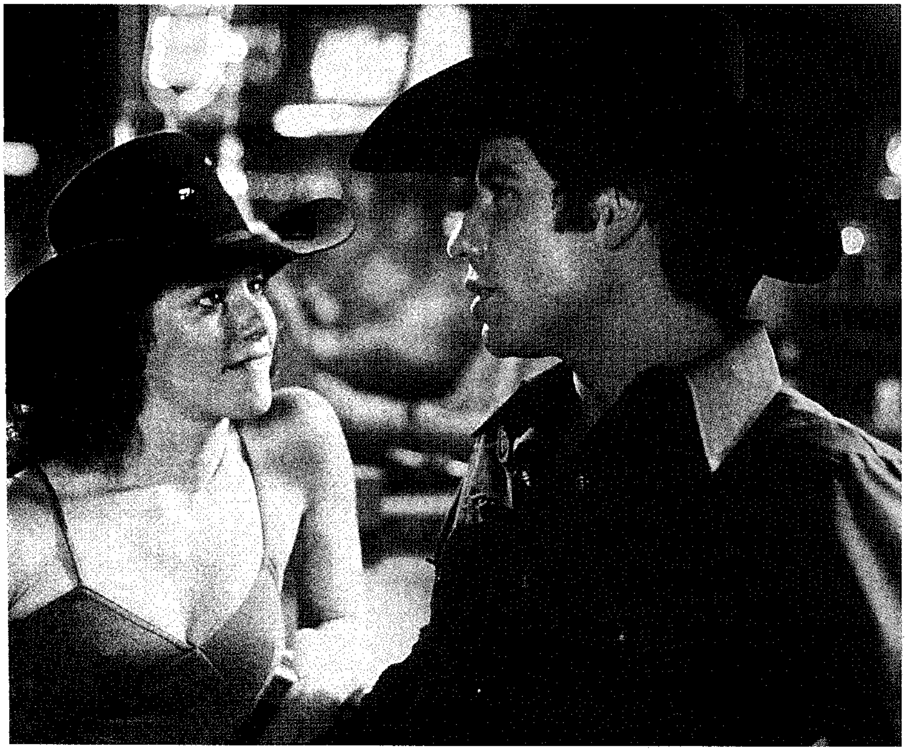
We actually tried to write some of these on-the-nose songs ourselves: We rhymed *scratch your itch* with *trailer hitch, rough dollar* with *blue collar,* and the ever-popular *assholes* with *elbows.*

That was when Phil suggested we needed professional help. He wanted to send our script to Clint Black. I liked the idea of Clint's doing our music, even though signing him would mean losing my favorite song in the movie, "Lookin' for Love." Unfortunately, he hadn't written it. We sent him the script anyway.

Clint called Phil and pronounced the project a "good thing," but he had some reservations. Phil suggested that he come to New York, where we would do a reading for him with actors, singers, and a piano player. We would interpolate some of his songs into the show (though we hoped he would write new songs later on). Clint agreed. We set a date.

With time now of the essence, I switched from taking notes by hand to typing changes directly into the computer. At the worst possible time, Phil and I had our first real fight. He suggested that we introduce the mechanical bull for the first time at Bud and Sissy's wedding. He wanted the cowboys to ride it in their tuxedos. I closed my laptop, got up, and walked out of the apartment, reminding myself that Jim Bridges and I had never fought.

A few tense days later, we met again. Phil asked why I had walked out. I said it was because I thought he had lost his mind. He said that was fine, but walking out wasn't the answer. He had a point, but I noticed that he never again mentioned cowboys in tuxedos riding the bull.



PICTURE PERFECT Clockwise from left, Latham with director Jim Bridges on the *Urban Cowboy* set in 1979; John Travolta rides the mechanical bull; Debra Winger and Travolta in Gilley's honky-tonk.

Phil enlisted Eddie Rabin—who looks like a hippie munchkin—to be our music director. He also lined up Binder Casting's Tom Cianfichi—tall, handsome, a Stone Phillips look-alike—to find our actors.

We decided to hold the auditions in my apartment on the Upper West Side. After all, the price was right. I informed Norman, my 60-year-old doorman, of our plans. He asked me if he could try out, too. I said I'd have to get back to him on that.

AT 1 O'CLOCK ONE AFTERNOON IN NOVEMber 1998, we were all in place, seated on couches and stuffed chairs in my living room: casting director, director, music director, choreographer, writer. We also had two actors, a male and a female, who were just helping out. They would play scenes opposite the auditioners.

The first actor to arrive was named Babs.

"Where do you want me?" asked Babs.

"Over there by the piano," said Phil, who had his black boots on that day.

"Shouldn't she be closer?" I asked. "She's twenty feet away."

"I know," Phil said. "That's too close, but if she backed up any more she would be out on the balcony."

"I still think she should be closer," I persisted. "Why doesn't she sit on the couch?" I wanted Phil to know that I had taken part in auditions before and knew what I was about. After all, *I* had been the one who spotted Debra Winger . . .

"This isn't a movie," Phil explained patiently. "There aren't any close-ups onstage. Back up, Babs." Auburn-haired, diminutive Babs had come to try out for the part of our hero's Aunt Corene. She sang two songs that she had chosen, making at least two syllables out of all her vowels, so she sounded country.

Babs made me laugh. I liked her. And thankfully I liked the scene we'd written for her, which didn't exist in the movie because it wasn't needed. It was in the show because Bud and Sissy had a costume change.

Next came black-haired, open-faced Chris, who was trying out for Bud. He had been in New York for five days. He sang and then read a scene with our Sissy stand-in.

"How many girls you done?" asked Sissy.

"Well, Spur's a real small town," said Bud. "There was only about five good-lookin' girls in the whole high school. How 'bout you?"

"There was about 2,000 good-lookin' guys in mine."

The small audience sitting in my living room did something wonderful: They laughed. I relaxed a little more. I liked Chris, but not enough. I wrote on my pad: *Not a leading man.*

An actor named Jamie—who looked a little like Fonzie on *Happy Days*—came in to try out for Bud, and he brought his harmonica with him. He read a scene that included Bud, Sissy, and her rival Pam. Unfortunately, we had only one female reader, so who was going to play Pam? Up stepped our only other reader, Taylor Poarch, a hulking male, an ex-cowboy D.J., the closest thing in the room to John Wayne. Reading Pam in a falsetto voice, he was so good we were tempted to give *him* the part.

"Hi, Sissy," said Jamie-as-Bud.

"Hi, Bud," said Sissy.

"You happy?" he asked.

"Hell, yes. I finally got what I wanted. I got me a real cowboy."

"Well, I finally got what I wanted, too. I got myself a real lady."

Enter Taylor-as-Pam. He was the voice of all my Texas aunts and all my Texas uncles at the same time.

"You're drunk," Taylor-as-Pam said to Sissy. "Ever tried AA? By the way, nice tattoo."

"Screw you," Sissy hissed. I felt sorry for Jamie, who'd gotten lost in the scene. My advice to young thespians: Never go up against somebody who is both a better actor *and* a better actress than you are.

So far, I was impressed. In Hollywood, you can go for days or even weeks without finding a single prospect. In New York, if you want to be in a musical, you actually have to know how to *do* something—i.e., sing or dance or, preferably, both. (I guess in Hollywood, anybody can call himself an actor. Not only is the talent more diluted, but Hollywood has Bob Evans—our producer. On my first day at Paramount, the casting director handed me two stacks of pictures. "These are the girls for Bob Evans," she said, "and these are the girls who can act.")

At the end of the day, we had two possible Buds, but despite the talent glut, we still didn't have a possible Sissy. I started to worry, because I knew from my movie experience that Sissys were hard to find.

Photographs: clockwise from left, courtesy of Aaron Latham; Shooting Star; Everett Collection.

After hundreds of auditions, we'd actually left Hollywood for Houston to make the movie without a Sissy. Debra Winger and Michelle Pfeiffer both flew down. They danced with John Travolta on Gilley's vast dance floor, and they rode the mechanical bull.

I told everybody who would listen: Michelle is prettier, but Debra is sexier. Not everyone agreed. Bob Evans pronounced Debra "unfuckable." He said he "wouldn't fuck her with a ten-foot pole." To his credit, Michael Eisner, then president of Paramount, told him: "Bob, your problem is you're not married. I am, and I can tell you, they *all* look fuckable to me."

THE TRUTH WAS, PHIL HAD someone in mind to play Sissy: a 17-year-old high-school senior named Lauren Lucas who lived in Columbia, South Carolina. He had worked with her in a Houston production of a charming vehicle called *Take This Show and Shove It.*

"She's gorgeous," Phil said. "She scares the boys away. I don't think she's ever been kissed." I e-mailed Lauren the script. When she finished reading it, she called to say that Bud couldn't touch her breasts. In the movie, Travolta cupped Debra Winger's breasts at the wedding reception for a gag photo. We had planned to carry this scene over into the musical. But not this time, unfortunately.

A couple of days later, we had callbacks. First up was James Carpinello, 22, who reminded me of a young Travolta but with a bigger nose. He wore a plain white T-shirt, motorcycle boots, and muscles from the gym. Born and raised near Albany, he didn't sound much like a cowboy, but then, Travolta had been more urban than cowboy when I first met *him.* We offered James the job. He wanted to know what it was like to work with John Travolta. Was he "method"? Was he difficult?

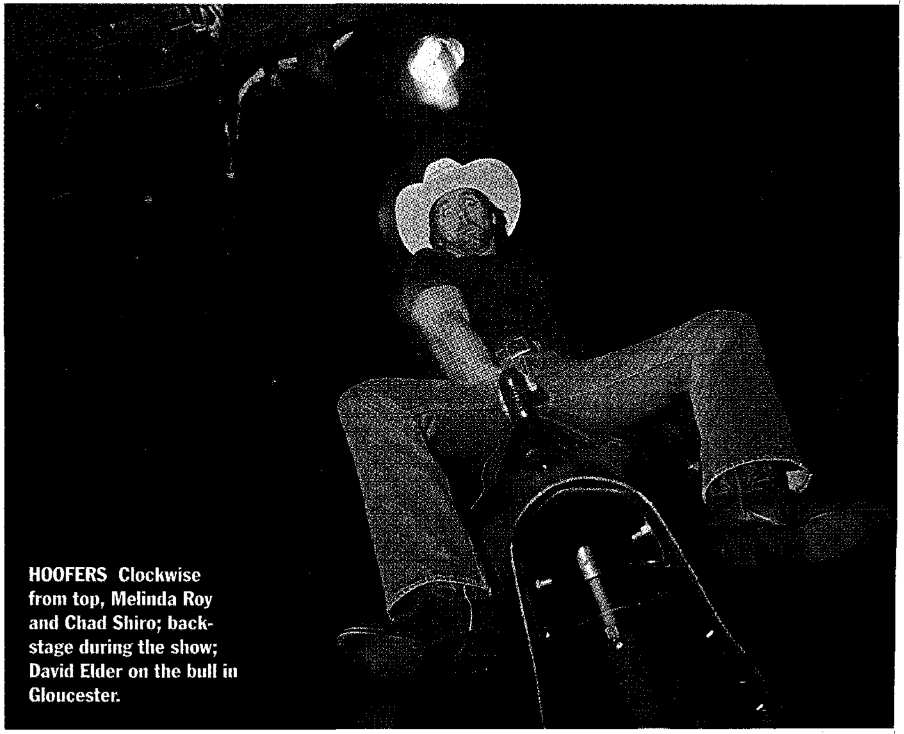
"No, he wasn't difficult," I said. "And he wasn't method either. His mother was an acting teacher. He thought he could act the role without having to live it."

While we were shooting the movie, everybody wore cowboy clothes—cast, crew, director, writer—everyone but John Travolta. As soon as we wrapped each evening, he would strip off his cowboy shirt and put on a T-shirt. He would exchange his cowboy boots for huge running shoes. He seemed to need to put a wall between himself and the role. But the day we finished shooting the movie, Travolta started wearing nothing *but* cowboy clothes.

Winger was just the opposite. She wanted to live the role in order to act the role. She thought the two of them should have real sex and real fights. But John wouldn't play. That is, he wouldn't play until we came to the scene in which he was supposed to slap her. Suddenly he got real. He slapped her so hard he knocked out one of her front teeth. Debra had finally gotten John to fight for real, but she still got nowhere trying to seduce him. Until we stopped shooting. Then John Travolta had an affair with Debra Winger and even asked her to marry him. But she said no. The movie was over.

CLINT BLACK NEVER DID MAKE IT TO THE reading. "Just how interested are you in doing the music for *Urban Cowboy*?" I asked him over the phone.

"Well, I do have some problems with it," Clint admitted in his Texas-cured drawl. "You know, people think *Urban Cowboy* changed country music. Made it less pure."



HOOFERS Clockwise from top, Melinda Roy and Chad Shiro; backstage during the show; David Elder on the bull in Gloucester.

"It helped bring a lot of people to country music who hadn't been fans before," I said. "That wasn't so bad, was it?"

"It was just *too* popular. People don't like that. Would you be willing to change the name?"

"No!" I said a little too sharply.

He sent $3,000 to help pay for the reading he would miss.

PHIL AND I HAD OUR SECOND FIGHT. WE disagreed about who should play Pam. He said my choice was just like every girl he had ever seen in every chorus. I said his Pam was even worse. Later he called to say that my Pam had a conflict and couldn't do the role anyway. I sort of believed him.

Actors Equity allows only twenty hours of rehearsal before a read-through. We started on Sunday at noon. We had four days to get the show on its feet, and we got off to an unpromising start. Jodi Stevens, Phil's blonde and beautiful Pam, showed up in character: Like the spoiled rich girl she was to play, Jodi hadn't done her homework. We wasted two precious hours going over the lyrics. I felt a spasm of pessimism. We were never going to be ready by Thursday!

Norman-my-doorman announced the arrival of Lauren Lucas, our 17-year-old Sissy. Tall, probably five-foot-ten. Well-constructed. Lovely face with a nose that tilted slightly upward. And long brown hair down to her shoulder blades. She really was Sissy from the first moment I saw her. It didn't hit me until later that Lauren hadn't even been born when the movie *Urban Cowboy* opened.

James Carpinello, our Bud, arrived; fortunately, he and Lauren had learned the words and most of the notes. When we rehearsed the falling-in-love scene, nobody kissed nobody.

Two hours later came Jim Newman, who would play Wes, the outlaw. Jim was from Alabama, so he already had a southern—if not quite a Texas—accent. He sang a Travis Tritt song about a convict who broke out of jail. In the movie, Wes was out on parole, but the real-life character he was based on was an escapee hiding out at Gilley's. Phil pronounced Jim "perfect."

On the second day of rehearsals, Sissy was first up.

THIS TIME WE INVITED SHOW PEOPLE.
Mike Nichols offered kind words and welcome advice: He thought we should change the ending.

"I'm set on fencin' in a desperado/ takes my breath away like Colorado," Lauren sang, taking my breath away, "who ain't afraid to walk a mile in my boots, *ooohh*, Buckaroo."

Then Jodi arrived. This time, she was ready. "Here's Pam's story," Phil said. "It's that business of *I love you, you're perfect, now change.* She's making him into her daddy. What she really wants is to feel, and she does feel in this song."

James Carpinello arrived, as always in white T-shirt, and got right to work.

"James, you're going into TV acting," Phil warned. "You've got to stay *big.*"

Tuesday, the penultimate rehearsal day, our Uncle Bob, Michael Mulheren, who had been sick, arrived more or less healthy and completely in character: avuncular and caustic. Michael's body is built on a wide chassis: He reminded me of a truck. In the musical, Uncle Bob's job is to tell Bud when he is screwing up, so Michael lectured James all day long. "Now, James, if you don't straighten up," he drawled, "I'm gonna have to take you out back and introduce you to somebody you don't wanna meet." When somebody mentioned that my wife, Lesley Stahl of *60 Minutes,* was going to be our narrator at the reading, Michael asked: "What's the matter, Ed Bradley wasn't available?"

I wanted Michael to be my Texas uncle. Some of them had let me down lately.

TWO MORNINGS LATER, 60 RENTED FOLDING chairs arrived at my apartment. We had scheduled the reading for two in the afternoon. As the invited audience began arriving, I hid out in my office. When I heard the piano, I emerged but stayed at the back of the room. We had a more than full house. I recognized the back of my daughter Taylor's head; she had driven down from Amherst College for the performance and would drive back as soon as it was over. I also recognized my agent, Sterling Lord. But mostly I recognized friends. We had deliberately not invited producers or investors, because we didn't think we were ready for them yet.

Lauren made a dramatic entrance, coming down a winding staircase. She and James had a long talk under a starry New York living-room Texas sky. Would they kiss at the end of the scene? Yes, they kissed. Was it her first kiss?

Lesley drew the biggest laugh. As narrator, she was called upon to describe the aftereffects of Bud's first rides on the mechanical bull. He kept getting hurt in the same painful place.

"Thanks to the bull, his balls are bruised," said my wife. "Aaron, do I have to keep saying *balls*?"

OUR SECOND STAGED READING—held last January—was in most ways superior to the first. Instead of my living room, we had the Clark Theater at Lincoln Center. Instead of just a piano player, we had a piano and a band. The $11,000 in production costs was underwritten by Prosper Arts, a small nonprofit production company run by a very young producer named Matthew Putman.

We had decided to field a different cast, because we thought we would learn more from seeing new faces and hearing new voices. We were fortunate to find a truly dazzling Sissy in Natasha Diaz, half Puerto Rican and half Italian, a Sissy who cried real tears onstage. We cast Jeremy Kushnier, the star of *Footloose,* as Bud. As Jesse, we were blessed with The Voice, B. J. Crosby, star of *Smokey Joe's Cafe,* which had just closed.

We also had a new music director, the tall, handsome, manic John Rosen, who not only played piano but also wrote some new songs for us. We used one of them to open the show:

Bud: *Hello, Houston, here I am / I heard that this is the promised land / I got nothin' to lose but my innocence.*

We even had Miss America: Kate Shindle, our new Pam, won the title in 1998. "Would you do a nude scene?" Phil asked.

"I'm really conscious of being Miss America," she said. "It would have to be really integral to the story. I wouldn't audition for *Hair.*"

"Aaron, would *you* do a nude scene?" Phil asked.

"Not only would I not do a scene with my clothes off," I said, "I wouldn't do a scene with my clothes *on.*"

This time, we invited show people. Playwright Wendy Wasserstein said kind things about our play. Mike Nichols also offered kind words and welcome advice: He thought we should change the ending. A representative from Disney loved the show but said Disney was only interested in making Disney musicals out of Disney movies.

I loved our second reading, saw how far we had come since the first, but I also felt restless and somewhat frustrated: I wanted to see the show on its feet and the mechanical bull kicking up its heels.

We submitted the script to lots of theaters; the Gloucester Stage Company invited us to come up to Massachusetts. They would underwrite the $65,000 production and make back roughly half that much on ticket sales. We would rehearse for two weeks and run for three.

ACT TWO

ON OUR FIRST DAY OF REHEARSALS, WE HAD a nor'easter. The wind blew, the rain fell in torrents, and, worst of all, it was about

40 degrees in our unheated rehearsal rooms. Phil wandered about with Lindy's pashmina shawl draped over his head ("It's called Madonna with beard," he muttered).

We had a new hero, because by now our first Bud (James Carpinello) was starring in *Saturday Night Fever* on Broadway (he got to play Travolta after all), and our second Bud (Jeremy Kushnier) was still starring in *Footloose.* We also had a new Sissy, because Natasha Diaz was starring in *Pippin* at the Paper Mill Playhouse.

LESLEY PROPOSED A TOAST:
"When you get to Broadway, break a leg and all their hearts."

We rehearsed at a dance camp in nearby Rockport. Upstairs was a big bare studio with one mirrored wall. Downstairs, we had a living room and a kitchen, both of which were freezing. We started with the dancing. If our show gets to Broadway, we will have twenty dancers, but in Gloucester we had two—Lindy and her partner, Chad Shiro—assisted by our new co-choreographer, Robert Royston. Lindy and Chad did a number of showy duets designed to divert the audience while stagehands moved furniture on and off the set.

"Something's wrong," said Phil. "I said I didn't want the dancing to be country the way you see it on TNN or CMT. But in what you're doing now, there isn't *enough* country. You need to slow it down. You need steps instead of pirouettes."

Lindy and Chad slowed it down, but not enough, according to Phil. "When we were doing *The Will Rogers Follies,"* Phil said, "we did this one dance where everybody was sitting down in a chair. It was the best dance in the show. In a dance, you need to define a limitation. That's what makes it great. So this time, why don't you pretend that your feet are nailed to the floor."

Lindy and Chad entwined their bodies and writhed like snakes with their tails nailed down.

"Even slower."

The snakes writhed more slowly.

"Slower. The slower, the sexier. If it's really sexy, you don't have to do too much. The audience isn't going to be bored."

They danced together like two willows, their roots anchored in the earth, limbs blowing gently in the wind, and they weren't boring.

Then Phil and I took Pam and Bud downstairs to rehearse dialogue. Not only did I not have a coat, but I hadn't even brought a sweater or sweatshirt. I considered taking down the drapes and wrapping myself in them.

"You're speaking too precisely," Phil told David Elder. He might just be the best Bud we have had. But he grew up in Houston and has been trying to play down his accent ever since.

"I'm sorry, diction is a big thing with me," David said.

"God, I hate diction queens," Phil retorted, laughing.

More scenes. More freezing.

"Bud has no subtext," Phil said. "Pam is *all* subtext. Bud just means what he says. Pam, no matter what she says, means 'I want to get laid.' "

At 6 P.M., we finally broke. We all ran for the cars, because cars have heaters.

I REPORTED TO PHIL'S PLACE AT 10 A.M. TO work on the script. We kept on fiddling with the opening, which was supposed to be a combination of song and monologue by Bud. It was to begin with his saying good-bye to Spur, so I wrote:

BUD: *I passed the Cadillac dealership, closed. Passed the John Deere dealership, closed. Passed the movie theater, closed. Passed the funeral parlor, open. That's the only growth industry in town.*

At noon, we went to the theater to rendezvous with three newly arrived actors: funny woman Susan Mansur (Aunt Corene), melodious Michael Arkin (Uncle Bob), and Angela Pupello (Sissy), who had finally gotten in around five o'clock in the morning. We piled into cars and headed for the dance camp to rehearse.

Phil and I worked with Bud and Sissy in the downstairs living room, and I learned another way in which plays are different from movies. Making a movie, the director usually lets the actors do whatever they want on the first take. Then he or she will say something vague like: "Give me a different color," and then, "Let's do it again." Later he or she goes in the cutting room and picks a favorite performance. In other words, film directors don't want every take to be the same. What would be the point? But theater directors want to find a performance that can be infinitely repeated. One just like the other, over and over, night after night. So Phil kept stopping the actors every few words to give them notes. That tactic would be expensive in the movie business, since it would waste a lot of film.

The next morning, we moved into the theater for the first time—267 East Main Street. We had a home at last. It felt cozy—there was heat, for one thing—but tense. Tom Zemon, the actor playing Wes, our villain, was acting a little *too* villainous offstage. When Phil confronted him, he apologized, saying he was so used to playing villains that he often came across as more negative than he intended. The rest of the day, Tom followed us all around like a puppy hoping to be petted.

After rehearsal, Piano John came over to Phil's to work on the opening song. They had a huge fight. Phil accused him of not being willing to cut anything. John accused Phil of destroying his music. Piano John also complained about his room. No phone. No curtains. Lumpy mattress. Misery upon misery.

LESLEY CAME UP TO WATCH REHEARSALS. SHE was crazy about Tom. "He's going to steal the show," Lesley predicted. "I know you wanted to fire him."

"I got over that."

"I never liked those songs until I heard him sing them," she added.

"Okay, Okay."

Then Tom fell asleep on the stage and snored while two other actors were rehearsing a scene. "Pay no attention to the beast," Phil said.

When it was his turn to rehearse, Tom woke up energized. As he sang "I know I broke the law," he put *broke* in quotes by crooking two fingers on each hand. During a break, Piano John started imitating him, gesticulations and all: "I know I *stabbed* my *wife.* I know she *bled* on the *carpet . . ."* On and on.

Angela chimed in: "I know I used a *chainsaw* on my *mother . . ."*

THEN PHIL GOT IN A FIGHT with Daria Hardeman, who played Jesse. We were rehearsing the scene where Wes blackmails Jesse into letting him stay in the trailer out behind Gilley's. Jesse said maybe it wasn't blackmail. Maybe Jesse secretly liked Wes. I thought maybe she had a point, but Phil didn't.

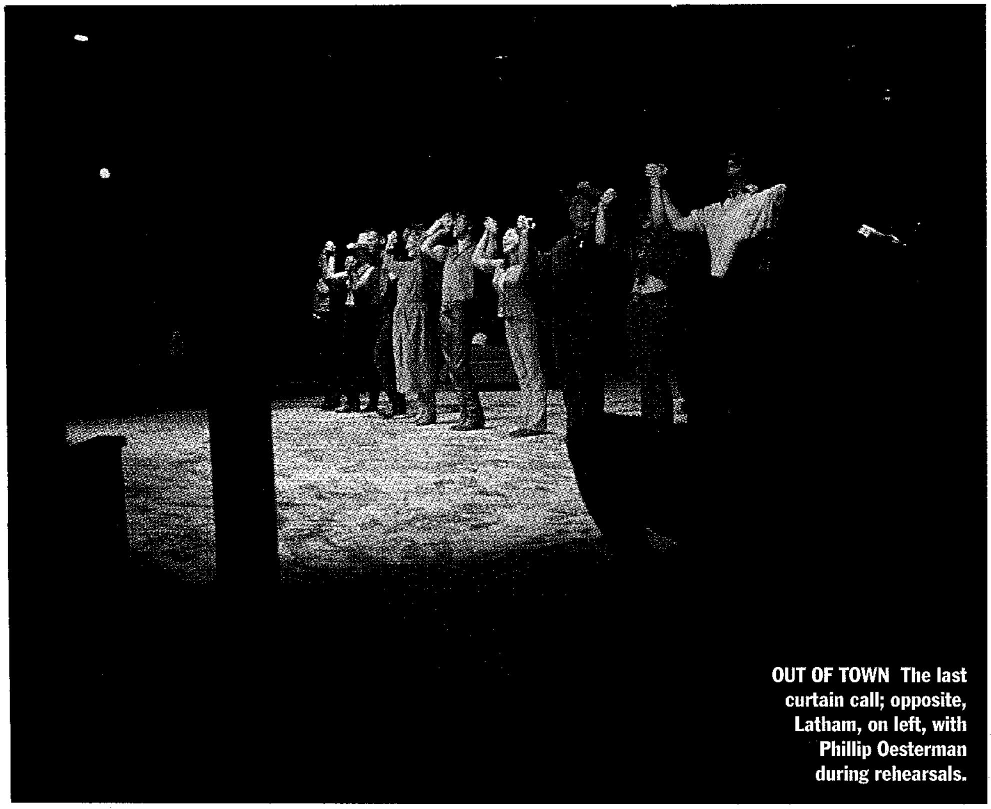
"No, it's just blackmail," Phil said. "She won't have anything to do with him. Not now. Not anymore."

"Okay," Jesse said, shaking her head.

"Why are you shaking your head?" demanded Phil. "I hate it when an actor agrees but shakes her head. If you disagree, tell me."

"I'll do it your way," said Jesse. "You're the boss."

"I find that insulting," Phil replied. "I find that *highly* insulting."



OUT OF TOWN The last curtain call; opposite, Latham, on left, with Phillip Oesterman during rehearsals.

When Phil finally calmed down, the actors did the scene the way he wanted. Later, Wes noticed that we had moved his last song from after the rodeo to before it. He said he wasn't sure the change would work for him. Oh, no. After rehearsal, Phil surprised me: "He's right." We would go back to the old progression: The song would come after the rodeo.

"Jesse will kill me," Phil said.

Lesley and I had dinner at the Yankee Clipper. We both had lobster, which is strangely hard to find in Gloucester-by-the-sea.

WHEN DAVID-AS-BUD STROLLED ONSTAGE to begin the show at a few minutes past eight, I was in the front row with an empty seat beside me; this time, Lesley was the victim of our bad weather, her flight delayed. Bud introduced himself to the audience with a song:

BUD: *In the town of Spur, my momma had a baby (me)*
In the shadow of a West Texas hill
My daddy sold his favorite milk-cow just to pay the doctor bill
Don't you know he had to pay the doctor bill

Which is exactly what my father had to do when I was born in Spur once upon a time.

The first act flew by. It was running more smoothly than I had dared to hope. But the second act seemed to have slowed down. And then something went wrong onstage. Two actors were supposed to walk on, but three stepped out instead. The two who belonged were Bud and the rich girl, Pam. The third, who didn't, was Aunt Corene. Not knowing what to do, she just stood there—trying to play a floor lamp—while Bud and Pam played their scene.

If we had been doing our show on Broadway, we would have had weeks of previews to fix our mistakes. But here we were in Gloucester without such a luxury. And there were the critics, ready or not. The Boston *Globe*'s Ed Siegel wrote: "*Ooee!* Them folks in Gloucester sure know how to *partyyy.* Remember that movie *Urban Cowboy* . . . Well, they turned it into a good ol' musical type thing with a buncha songs from the country station and a whole lotta bellybuttons. Ooee!" and on like that. Some people thought Siegel was simply making fun of us. Some others thought he liked it. I have no idea what he was trying to say.

The Boston *Herald* said the show was "a lot of fun" but felt "the action slows to a crawl" in the second act. Well, they got that right. Our host, playwright Israel Horovitz, the artistic director of the Gloucester Stage Co., summed it up: "You got one demented and one good review."

THE NEXT DAY, PHIL TOLD ME HE HAD learned something from Aunt Corene's gaffe. Maybe she had done us a favor. How so? Well, in her own mind, she had obviously cut the Bud-Pam scene she walked into. What if subconsciously she was right? Did we really need that Bud-Pam scene? What would happen if we cut it?

"Let's try it," I said. That evening we did, and the second act flowed much better. After Sunday's matinee, the cast had two days off. They came back rested and did a great job Wednesday night. I was elated. We invited tour bookers to Gloucester. They liked the show and wanted to send us on the road. One even mentioned investing a million dollars. We'll see.

Over the three-week run, our audiences kept getting larger. We sold out our final week. The last performance was our best. The audience gave the cast a standing ovation. We all went out to a restaurant called the Rudder and danced until almost dawn. During a pause in the dancing, Lesley proposed a toast: "When you get to Broadway, break a leg and all their hearts."

OUR NEXT STEP WILL BE A RUN in February in Fort Myers, Florida, followed by a possible tour and . . . Broadway? I am in that all-too-familiar position of hoping but trying not to hope too much. Some mornings, I wake up and feel that all my red blood cells have taken on extra oxygen and are pumping me up with optimism. Other mornings, I wake up with no oxygen in my red blood cells. Hope gasps for air.

The curtain is going up on a whole new act in my life. There will be no guaranteed happy ending. This isn't a movie; this is theater, and I am on the edge of my seat. No, Phil isn't Jim Bridges, but I've stopped needing him to be. Phil and I never write the same dialogue overnight, but we do agree on things the next morning. Usually. And for a time, at least, my cowboy has indeed come back. ■

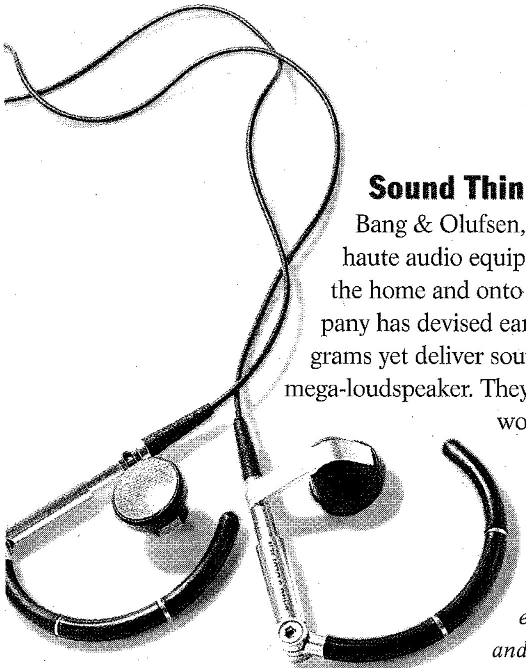
BEST BETS

The best of all possible things to buy, see, and do in the best of all possible cities

BY CORKY POLLAN

Biased Opinion

Donna Karan has reinvented the ultimate preppy essential, the Fair Isle sweater. Hers is asymmetrical, lopsided, and though it looks like the work of a tipsy knitter it's actually hand-knit in Uruguay of wool, mohair, and nylon. Fair Isle has never looked so fresh ($328). DKNY/*655 Madison Avenue, at 60th Street/212-223-3569*



Sound Thinking

Bang & Olufsen, the Danish manufacturer of haute audio equipment, is intent on moving out of the home and onto the street. To that end, the company has devised earphones that weigh only eight grams yet deliver sound quality comparable to a B&O mega-loudspeaker. They're ergonomically designed and work like old-fashioned eyeglasses, which means each aluminum-and-rubber earphone can easily be adjusted to fit the contours and curves of any ear ($160). BANG & OLUFSEN/*952 Madison Avenue, at 75th Street, 212-879-6161; and 927 Broadway, near 21st Street, 212-388-9792*

New York
shops
1000 Great Stores

Check out *New York Shops,* our comprehensive guide to the city's best stores, including a year's worth of "Best Bets." On sale at newsstands now. To order a copy, call 800-496-7833 ($4.99 plus $2 shipping and handling).

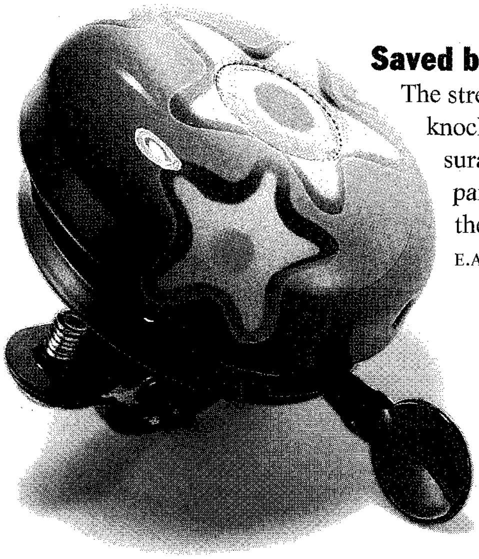
More Than the Greatest . . .

Once merely "pickers," Greg Wooten and Patrick Parrish are now the ebullient owners of Mondo Cane. The name of the store is taken from Jacopetti's 1962 "shockumentary" and their stock from estate sales, antiques shows, flea markets, and thrifts. Since modernism is their passion, the pair carry a broad sweep of furniture, lighting, ceramics, glassware, and objets that reflects the modernist movement from 1880 to 1980. Most of the expected names are here (George Nelson, Charles Eames, Eliel Saarinen, and Edward Wormley), along with lacquered tables by James Mont (the infamous decorator to the mob) and oddball stuff such as magnetic industrial lamps and scientific models of brains. (From $125 for a ceramic vase to $3,200 for a Vladimir Kagan glass table to $9,500 for a fifties sectional sofa.)

MONDO CANE/*143 West 22nd Street/646-486-7616*

Photograph by Carina Salvi.

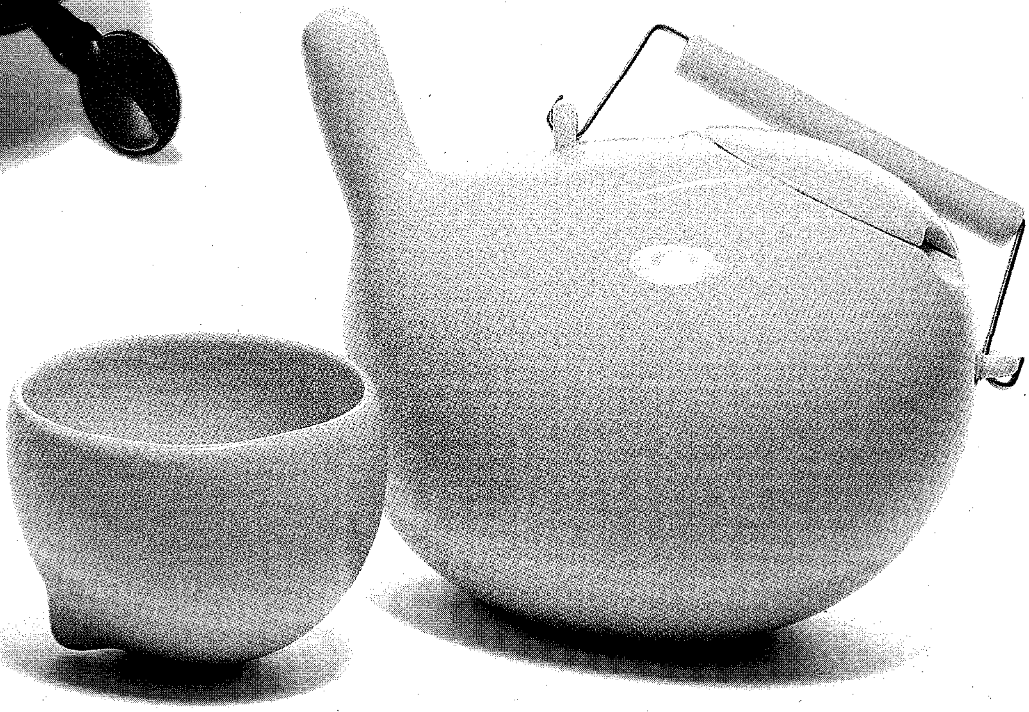
Saved by the Bell



The streets of New York are alive with trikes and Razor scooters; if one hasn't knocked you over yet, the other surely will. Now there's help for kids, their insurance-coverage-panicked parents, and pedestrians. Pylones, a French company, has come out with stainless-steel bells that ring sharp and clear, and they fit not only on bikes but on the bars of scooters too ($20).

E.A.T. GIFTS/*1062 Madison Avenue, near 80th Street/212-861-2544*

Pretty Steep



Ceramist Marek Cecula's fascination with ritual and ceremony is not relegated to abstract ideas; he translates his preoccupation into functional objects. One such is the Kum-Kum Tea Set he's created with Polish architect Daga Kopala: It's minimalistic, yet witty, with roots in both the Bauhaus and traditional Japanese decorative arts. Though the set's handmade (of high-fired porcelain), Cecula boasts "it bears no sign of the hand" ($200; teapot plus four cups).

GLOBAL TABLE/*107 Sullivan Street/212-431-5839*

MXYPLYZYK/*125 Greenwich Avenue/212-989-4300*

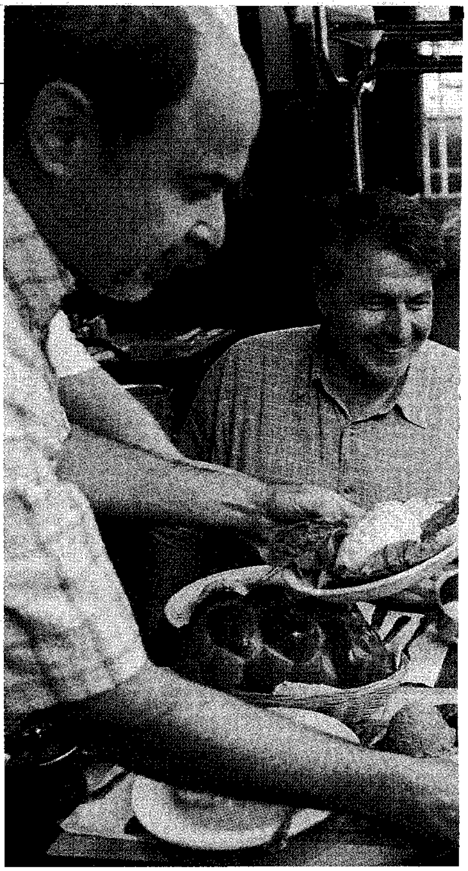
Photographed by Nedjeljko Matura

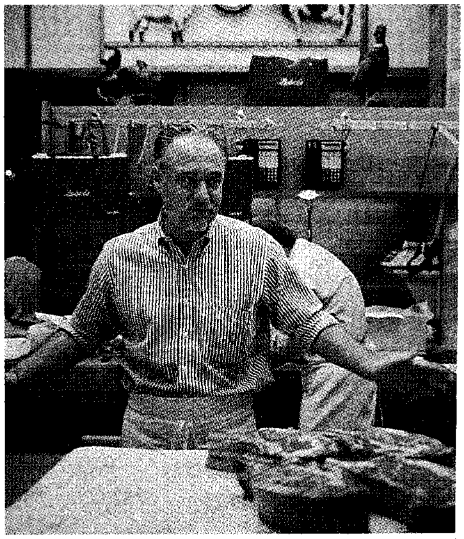
Send shopping questions to Corky Pollan, *New York* Magazine, 444 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022-6999.

SMARTCITY

Rush Hashanah

No time to home-cook a proper New Year's dinner? Try chef Anne Rosenzweig's takeout guide to the works, from gefilte fish to rugalach. By Sarah Bernard





IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE, BUT ROSH HASHANAH is here again. If you promised yourself last time that you'd learn to cook a brisket or bake a honey cake, but have only managed to expand your collection of Chinese-takeout menus in the twelve months since, don't feel bad. Laying down the charge card instead of dusting off the pots and experimenting with the matzo meal is as much a New York Jewish tradition as the dinner itself.

Anne Rosenzweig, chef and owner of the Lobster Club, began catering Rosh Hashanahs five years ago after one too many regulars phoned her in a panic. "They'd call and say, 'Anne! We just realized the holidays are *tomorrow*!' " she says. Now that she's an expert on down-to-the-wire New Year cuisine, we asked her to show us the best places—her own kitchen included—for time-challenged New Yorkers to buy their Rosh Hashanah feasts.

The only constants in a Rosh Hashanah meal are sweet ingredients (to promote a sweet New Year). Otherwise, every family has its own variation. For some, pickles are de rigueur; for others it's not truly a party without Manischewitz. Rosenzweig's ideal menu begins with the traditional serving of sliced apples, challah bread, and honey, followed by gefilte fish, matzo-ball soup, and chopped liver. Brisket and roast chicken are the main course, with tzimmes (a mix of sweet potatoes, carrots, prunes, and sometimes more brisket) and noodle kugel (a casserole of egg noodles, farmer cheese, and cinnamon) on the side. Dessert—everything from rugalach to honey cake—is almost another meal in itself.

Still in her red chef clogs, Rosenzweig heads first to the **Union Square Greenmarket** (30 East 16th Street; 212-477-3220). "This is really a harvest holiday," she says, inspecting a leafy apple, "so you want that sense of the fall harvest." She quickly homes in on the stands from **Breezy Hill Orchard**, purveyors of the tart and reddish-green King Luscious apples, and **Locust Grove Farms**, her choice for tiny Seckel pears, a Rosenzweig family tradition. "They contrast well with the honey," she says, scooping up a jar of the wildflower-and-clover variety from **Twin Spruce Apiary** ($3 a jar) a few booths away.

For the all-important challah bread, Rosenzweig chooses **Orwasher's Bakery** (308 East 78th Street; 212-288-6569), where traditional round loaves have been baked for Rosh Hashanah in the basement of its Yorkville tenement since 1916. "To symbolize no beginning and ending," explains Rosenzweig as she samples a still-warm slice (small, $4.50; large, $5.75). The holiday loaf, made from a different dough, is also richer and sweeter than the year-round variety, says owner Abram Orwasher. Those who want to take the sugar content up a notch can opt for the raisin version (small, $4.75; large, $6). Reservations for both kinds will be accepted until Thursday, after which customers can just come down in person and hope they get lucky. "Not to worry," says Orwasher, who's been doing this for three generations. "We have plenty."

One of the last classic Jewish delis left standing, the **2nd Avenue Deli** (156 Second Avenue; 212-677-0606) verges on theme-restaurant status. Still, Rosenzweig insists that their matzo-ball soup and chopped liver reign supreme. Whether customers place orders or stop by on Rosh Hashanah afternoon, they will leave happy, as stock is constantly replenished. "There are three or four people standing in there for days doing nothing more than making matzo balls," says owner Jack Lebewohl. "Last year we lost count. If you said 10,000, 12,000, I'd believe you."

With the appetizers out of the way, Rosenzweig turns to the entrées. **Mitchel London Foods** (542 Ninth Avenue, at 40th Street, 212-563-5969; and 22 East 65th Street, 212-737-2850) is her pick for the juiciest roast chicken, stuffed with rosemary and garlic. But for brisket she taps **Lobel's** (1096 Madison Avenue, at 82nd

Photographs by Robert Wright.

A MOVABLE FEAST Clockwise from top, Anne Rosenzweig tests the matzo-ball soup at the 2nd Avenue Deli; Abram Orwasher at his bakery; Evan Lobel's got brisket to go.

Street; 212-737-1372). Though primarily a butcher shop, Lobel's developed a prepared-food holiday menu after customers repeatedly asked for help. A container of brisket with carrots and onions that serves three is $35.

To accompany the meat dishes, Rosenzweig recommends her own tzimmes, which is now sold to order ($4 per portion) at the **Lobster Club** (24 East 80th Street; 212-249-6500). She began honing the recipe as a teenager, spiking it with golden raisins, apricots, and caramelized brown sugar. Salmon gefilte fish is another holiday specialty of the house, and it no doubt blows the doors off your grandmother's version. Rosenzweig tweaks the usual combination of pike and whitefish with some North Atlantic salmon; the result is a pinkish tint and a sweeter taste counteracted by a dollop of red-beet horseradish on the side ($4 per serving).

The name **Russ & Daughters** (179 East Houston Street; 212-475-4880) is most often associated with cases of gleaming lox and pickled herring, but Rosenzweig goes there for the perfectly sweetened noodle kugel ($4.95 per loaf pan) and their gefilte fish made from whitefish, pike, and carp ($1.99 each). "The kugel is not overwhelmingly sweet, and the fish is more traditional, darker."

With all the pastry options in the city, you might assume that buying dessert would be a piece of cake. Not so. "Well-done traditional Jewish desserts are the hardest thing to find," says Rosenzweig. "Royal Kosher, where Seinfeld went for black-and-whites, isn't there anymore. Mosha's in Brooklyn is gone. Others have become so commercialized that they're not that ethnic. Their pastries don't have that intense flavor and chewy texture."

Russ & Daughters' rugalach ($11.90 per pound), however, remains the essence of rugalach: full of cinnamon and raisins and with a not-too-dense texture. The hand-rolled version from **Sarabeth's Bakery** (in the Chelsea Market, 75 Ninth Avenue, at 15th Street; 212-989-2424) also makes the grade; Rosenzweig declares it "the most refined and the prettiest." For traditional honey cake made to order (plus even more rugalach), she recommends **Margaret Palca Bakes** in Brooklyn (191 Columbia Street; 718-802-9771). "Honey cake should have a chewy but wonderfully sticky quality," says Rosenzweig. Palca's is the real thing.

Gertel's Bake Shop (53 Hester Street; 212-982-3250) is one of the last remaining sources for teiglach ($10), an old-world dessert made of pastry nuggets held together with honey and covered with roasted nuts and candied cherries that Rosenzweig likes to call "the Jewish version of croquembouche." Drop by **Soutine** (104 West 70th Street; 212-496-1450) to order their lemon or chocolate almond cakes, "a light and delicate version of old-fashioned Jewish pound cakes," sure to give you a sugar high, or at least make the Yom Kippur fast something to look forward to. ■

Party Like It's 5761

If cracking open a takeout container sounds too labor-intensive for you, some restaurants offer Rosh Hashanah menus. **Lobster Club** (see text) will be serving matzo-ball soup with carrots and dill, salmon gefilte fish, chopped chicken livers, roast chicken with tzimmes, brisket with savory noodle kugel, and honey-almond cake with Seckel pears and whipped cream. **Blue Ribbon Bakery** (33 Downing Street; 212-337-0404) will offer sweet-and-sour braised short ribs with tzimmes, noodle kugel, and grilled leeks, along with baked apples with honey, figs, and raisins for dessert. (It'll also be making challah bread to order; $8 for a two-pound round.) At **Campagna** (24 East 21st Street; 212-460-0900), Mark Strausman will be cooking up Tuscan pot roast, vegetable kugel, and potato latkes, with cinnamon-apple kugel for dessert. A $64 prix fixe holiday dinner at **Tocqueville** (15 East 15th Street; 212-647-1515) includes chicken kreplach, pan-roasted salmon, roasted guinea hen, and a sugarless apple tart. Uptown at **Avenue** (520 Columbus Avenue, at 85th Street; 212-579-3194), they'll be dishing out matzo-ball soup, gefilte fish, braised lamb shank with mashed kasha, honey sponge cake with apple compote, and caramel ice cream. A $46 prix fixe at the **Church Lounge** (2 Sixth Avenue; 212-519-6677) will feature beet consommé with gefilte-fish quenelles, poached Alaskan wild king salmon, and handmade challah. S.B.

SHYAMA PATEL

Trips and Fall

Autumn in New York—*upstate, that is—never seemed so inviting. Especially when day trips are this affordable: Time to* **take your leave to see the leaves.**

IT'S A BRIGHT, NIPPY FALL Saturday—and you're kicking yourself for not having booked a room in the Berkshires. Instead of sitting around feeling glum, pull on your hiking boots, pack a sandwich, and hop a bus to the Catskills. Within two hours of Manhattan, you'll find top-notch trails and gorgeous fall foliage. Best of all, a day trip will probably cost you less than an afternoon of bumming around the city.

By far the simplest short hop is **Bear Mountain State Park**, only 45 miles from Manhattan. A $19.95, 75-minute **ShortLine** bus ride will drop you at the gate for a day of hiking or fishing (bring your own gear). For the less athletically inclined, there's a zoo. For sport *and* culture, try the **Storm King Art Center**. A $37.95 ShortLine ticket includes an hour-and-45-minute bus ride from Port Authority at 10 A.M. any weekend day, admission, and a bus back in the evening. The outdoor museum has 500 acres of rolling hills, dotted with world-class sculpture and pretty picnic spots.

For off-the-beaten-path hiking, you'll want to head further north. Take a $31.95 (round trip), 90-minute **Adirondack Trailways** bus to New Paltz—they leave several times daily—and then a short taxi ride to any of three huge interconnected hiking areas (remember to arrange for a cab to pick you up!). The biggest, **Minnewaska State Park**, is short on services but has 12,000 acres of cliffs and waterfalls, and 50 miles of walking paths and biking trails. Entrance is free if you're not driving.

Day-trippers can also pay $13 ($10 on weekdays) to access miles of trails around the **Mohonk Mountain House** resort. The trails and "scrambles," as the steepest ones are called, offer the best local views; rustic gazebos are good for breaks. Treat yourself to a fancy post-hike lunch in the restaurant (reservations required).

For wilder terrain, head to **Mohonk Preserve**, a nearby section of the Shawangunk Ridge. The 'Gunks offer world-class rock-climbing and 60 miles of foot paths and rugged trails with killer views. Entrance is $7 ($5 on weekdays). Climbing lessons are run from the **Eastern Mountain Sports** store at the base of the mountain. A full-day group class is $165 per person. Reserve ahead.

Bear Mountain (914-786-2701); ShortLine Buses (800-631-8405 or 212-736-4700); Storm King Art Center (914-534-3115); Adirondack Trailways (800-858-8555); Minnewaska State Park Preserve (914-255-0752); Mohonk Mountain House (914-255-1000); Mohonk Preserve (914-255-0919); Eastern Mountain Sports, 3124 Route 44-55, Gardiner, N.Y. (800-310-4504).

DO NOT PHONE: Send suggestions to Shyama Patel, *New York* Magazine, 444 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022-6999, four weeks before the sale. Sales exclusive to "Sales & Bargains" and not previously advertised or published elsewhere will be given preference.

Picks of the Week

SoHo Shoe Salon is shaving 30 to 70 percent off prices on large-size shoes for women (sizes 10 to 14). Sale items are $29 to $89 a pair. *Bizz Productions, 36 W. 37th St., fifth floor (877-838-3220); A.E., M.C., V.; Mon.–Wed. noon–7; 9/25–9/27.*

Salon Moderne is clearing 100 pieces of stylish contemporary furniture at 40 to 70 percent off. Prices range from $30 for a Moeve towel to $2,700 for a Jean-Michel Frank cashmere sofa. A few vintage things, too. *Tribeca Loft, 169 Hudson St., second floor (212-219-3439); A.E., M.C., V.; Fri.–Tues. 10–7; 9/29–10/3.*

This & That's brightly colored Indian textiles and shawls (sold at stores like Calypso) are 60 to 75 percent off at the sale, from $25 to $100. *376 Broadway, near Franklin St., Suite 19B (212-791-9737); cash only; Thurs.–Sat. 1–8; 9/28–9/30.*

Editor's note: In the September 18 "Sales & Bargains," one "Picks of the Week" listing misrepresented the event. Though the sale did include Cerruti clothes, it had no connection to the company or its stores. *New York* regrets any misunderstanding. ■

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Illustration by Alli Arnold.

CITY WEDDINGS

Congratulations! You're engaged to be married. From now until you say, "I do," there will be many important decisions to be made. City Weddings is your guide to the most outstanding bridal resources right here in the region. Whether you are planning an intimate celebration or a grand gala, City Weddings will provide you with the inspiration and information you will need to create the wedding of your dreams.

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HERE COMES THE BRIDE

New York is the capital of the fashion world, and the best place to find the perfect wedding dress to suit your personal style.

photo: Sarah Merians Photography & Company

MICHELLE ROTH

A spectacular collection of bridal wear, mother-of-the-bride, special occasion dresses, and accessories have made **Michelle Roth** (24 W. 57th St., Suite 203, 245-3390; www.michelleroth.com, www.michellerothbeauty.com) the premier upscale bridal salon for the most discriminating tastes. Here, you'll find incomparable service, and a warm, relaxing environment, along with a range of exquisite dresses from Paris, Milan, London, and Rome, including exclusive gowns by Elizabeth Emanuel, designer and creator of Princess Diana's wedding dress. Additionally, Michelle Roth has launched a range of beauty products for the bride-to-be called "Michelle Roth Eye Dew." You can find it at the salon or online at www.michellerothbeauty.com.

Michelle Roth will be featuring a trunk show with Italian designer Peter Langner October 26 through 28. Mr. Langner will be available personally to customize your wedding, mother-of-the-bride, or special occasion dress. Call for an appointment.

THE BRIDAL GARDEN

Another shop of note is **The Bridal Garden** (122 E. 29th St., 252-0661), which resells donated couture and designer gowns by Ulla Maija, Vera Wang, Nancy Issler, and One of A Kind Bride, among others, for a fraction of their original price. Most of these dresses have never been worn. All proceeds go to Sheltering Arms Children's Service, which has been helping disadvantaged children since 1823. Those who donate a wedding gown to The Bridal Garden will receive a tax deduction for their good deed. Call for an appointment.

KLEINFELD

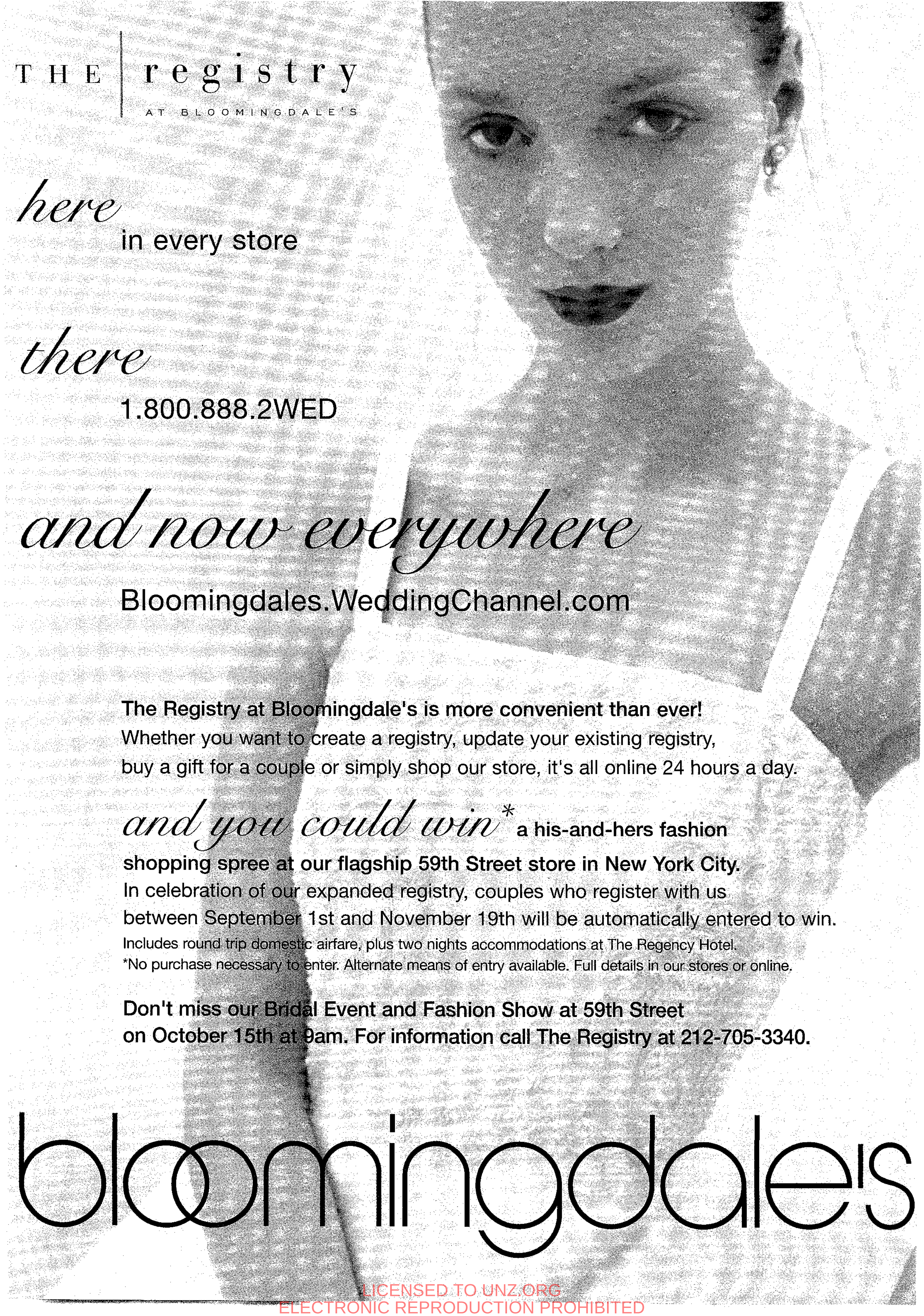
Kleinfeld is the world's most famous place to shop for wedding dresses. For over 60 years, brides have selected **Kleinfeld** (8202 Fifth Ave, Brooklyn, NY 1-888-383-2777; www.kleinfeldbridal.com), for its unparalleled selection, exclusive designs, and unmatched personal service and attention. "We have more than 800 styles of wedding dresses. Many of our dresses are created exclusively for Kleinfeld by the world's leading designers," explains Betty Lou Aluisio, executive vice president and general merchandise manager.

At Kleinfeld, each bride receives her own personal consultant at the initial bridal

MICHELLE ROTH

> "DESIGNERS ARE CREATING LOOKS THAT FLATTER EVERY FIGURE AND MAKE THE WHOLE BRIDAL PARTY HAPPY."

KLEINFELD



THE | registry
AT BLOOMINGDALE'S

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and now everywhere
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The Registry at Bloomingdale's is more convenient than ever!
Whether you want to create a registry, update your existing registry,
buy a gift for a couple or simply shop our store, it's all online 24 hours a day.

*and you could win** **a his-and-hers fashion shopping spree at our flagship 59th Street store in New York City.**
In celebration of our expanded registry, couples who register with us between September 1st and November 19th will be automatically entered to win.
Includes round trip domestic airfare, plus two nights accommodations at The Regency Hotel.
*No purchase necessary to enter. Alternate means of entry available. Full details in our stores or online.

Don't miss our Bridal Event and Fashion Show at 59th Street on October 15th at 9am. For information call The Registry at 212-705-3340.

bloomingdale's

appointment. The personalization doesn't stop there. "When a bride comes back for her first dress fitting, she is assigned her own fitter who stays with her until the dress fits perfectly," adds Aluisio. "We're here to make the customer happy in all aspects." To this end, the owners are present at this comfortable salon to assure complete perfection. Their mission is to ensure that each bride walks down the aisle in an exceptional dress with a perfect fit. If you have your eye on a certain style but would like changes, Kleinfeld will customize a gown to match it. For more information about Kleinfeld, visit www.kleinfeld-bridal.com.

BRIDESMAIDS IN STYLE

Gone are the days of impossibly unattractive bridesmaid's attire. Today leading designers are creating looks that flatter every figure and make the whole bridal party happy.

NICOLE MILLER

Hip designer **Nicole Miller** (1-877-777-9363; www. nicolemiller.com) is emphasizing separates this year for bridesmaids that include satin skirts that can be paired with a wonderful selection of tops. These skirts come in a variety of shapes and lengths, such as ball gown. For cooler weather, there are mohair sweaters, angora twin sets, sheer mohair wrap sweaters, and a mohair shawl. Spring and summer weddings are perfect for beaded sweaters that include halters, cardigans, capped sleeves, and tanks. Beyond separates, Nicole Miller is also featuring long and short satin sheaths with pearl strap details. Hot spring colors include champagne, lilac, periwinkle, and platinum.

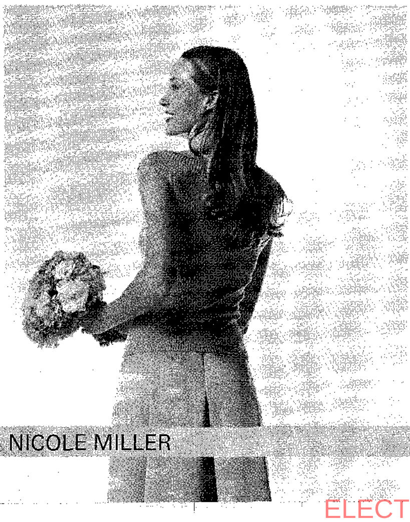
Nicole Miller is introducing several new styles for brides such as a beautiful silk Dupioni lace-back dress and a lovely halter dress. Mothers of the bride will find Nicole Miller embroidered satin suits with short skirts or long skirts that feature either side slits or a pleated back.

View the entire Nicole Miller bridesmaid line online, at the 32 Nicole Miller boutiques nationwide, and at Neiman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue, and Nordstrom. There you'll also find dyeable satin shoes that are strappy, comfortable, and sexy, plus beaded or satin clutches.

THE BRIDAL PARTY—DRESSES FOR BRIDESMAIDS

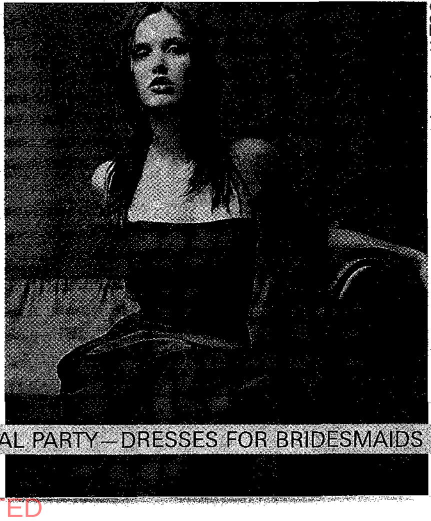
Separates are still popular at **The Bridal Party—Dresses for Bridesmaids** (243 E. 82nd St., 861-2318; www.wedding-central.com/ny/bridalp) "Separates allow the bride to find clothes that flatter her bridesmaids, no matter what their body type," states owner Daphne Silverstein. "We have wonderful cashmere sweaters and matte jersey tops in a variety of styles to match with our skirt separates." Skirts here are full length and ball gown style, plus some new skirts from Jim Hjelm are knee length.

There is also a trend to dressier bridesmaid's fashions. "Weddings have become so traditional again and bridesmaids really want to dress the part. It's almost a backlash to the idea of finding something that you must wear again because most bridesmaids really don't wear



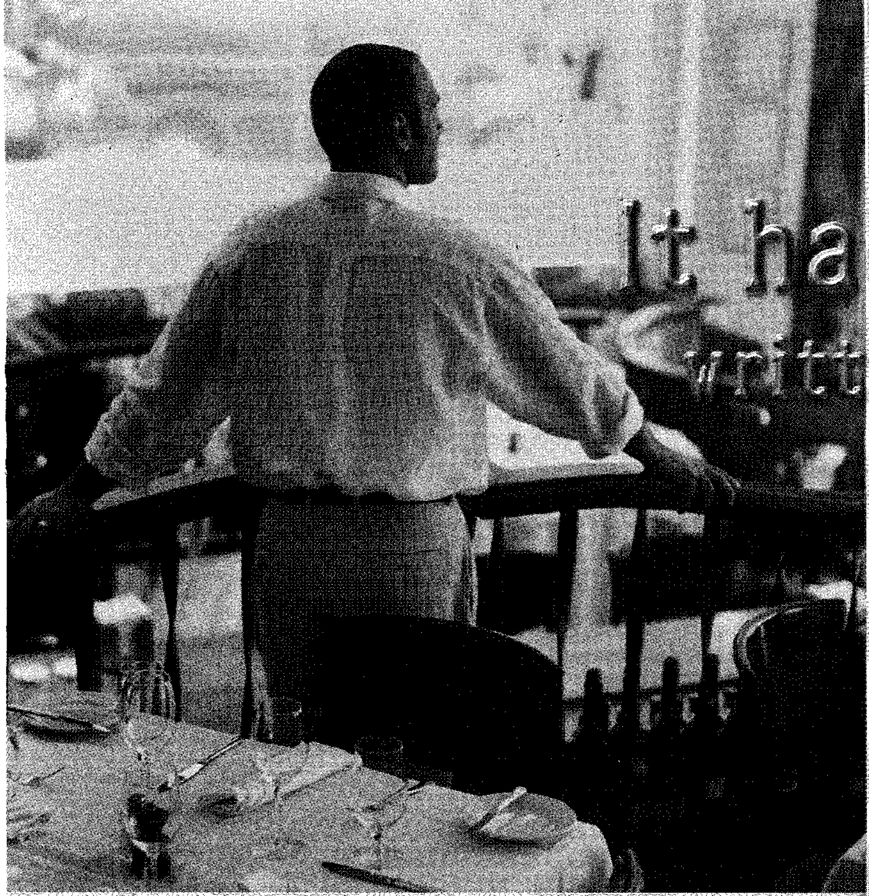
NICOLE MILLER

> "SPRING AND SUMMER WEDDINGS ARE PERFECT FOR BEADED SWEATERS THAT INCLUDE HALTERS, CARDIGANS, CAPPED SLEEVES, AND TANKS."

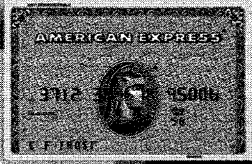


dress by: WTOO

THE BRIDAL PARTY—DRESSES FOR BRIDESMAIDS



It had party written all over it.



You found a perfect place — the right food, the right location and the right service.

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212-943-9050

RODEO
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212-683-6500

Ellen's Stardust Diner
1650 Broadway
(at 51st Street)
New York, NY 10019
212-956-5151

Shun Lee Palace
155 East 55th Street
New York, NY 10022
212-371-8844

GUSTAVINO'S
& Club Guastavino
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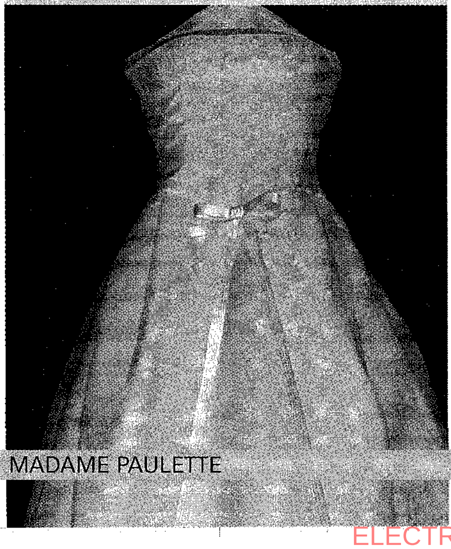
DRESS CARE
MADAME PAULETTE

After the big day, the bridal specialists at Madame Paulette (1255 Second Ave., 1-877-COUTURE; www.madamepaulette.com) will carefully clean and restore your wedding gown to its original splendor, arranging the piece in an acid-free chamber. For over 40 years, **Madame Paulette** has specialized in couture cleaning, finishing, tailoring, restoration, and preservation of the finest wedding gowns in the world, including the gown Melissa Rivers wore to her Plaza Wedding. Madame Paulette is recommended by leading couturiers including Badgley Mischka, Randi Rahm, and Vera Wang, to name a few. Sotheby's recommends Madame Paulette for the cleaning, maintaining, and restoration of custom pieces that are to be placed at auction. Call to make an appointment for a free consultation. Free pick-up and delivery are available in Manhattan. Worldwide shipping is also available.



MADAME PAULETTE

the dress again," continues Silverstein." In keeping with this trend, big ball gowns, tulle skirts, mini-bustles, and taffeta are making a comeback. As for color, the neutral year-round colors still going strong are silver, pewter, and charcoal. "We're selling a lot of silver metallic knit tops matched with long, full satin skirts," concludes Silverstein.

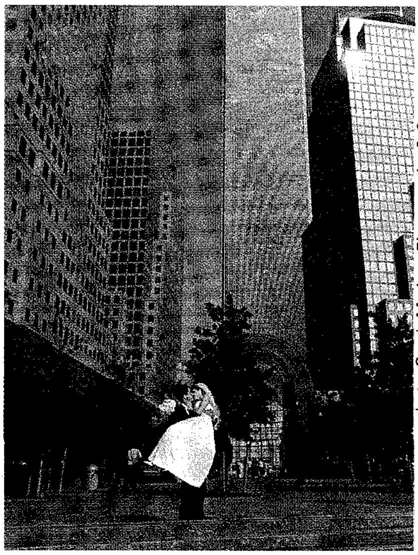


photo: Sarah Merians Photography & Company

BRIDE'S BEST FRIENDS

Separates, in the hot fabric taffeta, are flying off the racks at **Bride's Best Friends** (11 E. Palisade Ave., Englewood, NJ, 201-541-1333). These mix and match elements, from Vera Wang, include halter and tank tops, and skirts that are designed in an A-line, with a side pleat, a back pleat, or straight shape. "Separates have really caught on. We're now carrying lines from Nicole Miller, Watters & Watters, Dessy, and Jim Hjelm," reports co-owner Ilene Rauch-Negri. "Mix and match means that brides can give their bridesmaids flexibility and choice within a designer's line." Hot colors this year are the neutral tones of charcoal and pewter and the bold shades of ruby red and fuchsia. New this year is the Vera Wang Flower Girl Collection in size 2T to girls' size 14. These dresses are designed as miniature versions of the Vera Wang bridesmaid collection, which Bride's Best Friends stocks in its entirety. You'll find personal service here from the shop's co-owners Elizabeth Schwartz-Fisher and Ilene Rauch-Negri, and no sales tax on clothing, thanks to the convenient New Jersey locale.

photo: Fred Marcus Photography

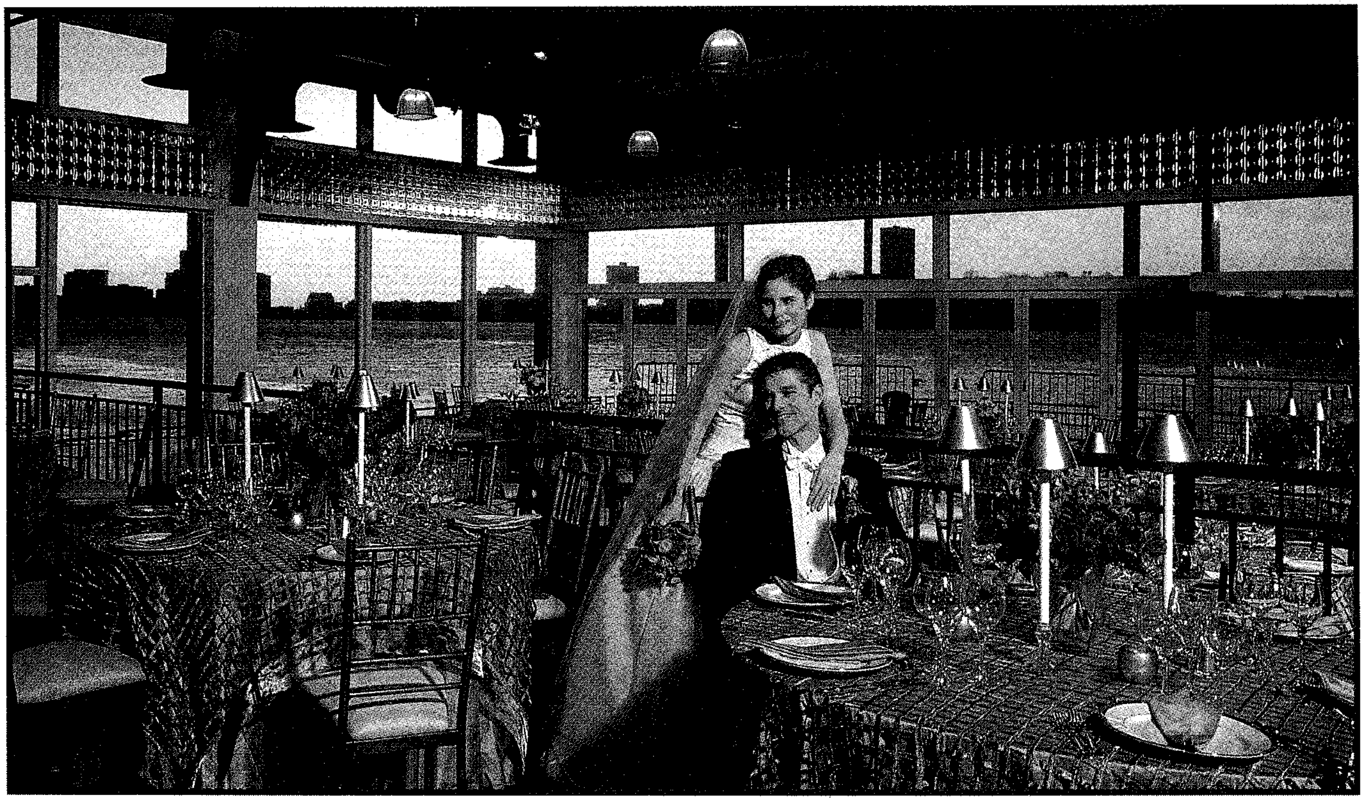
> "AFTER THE BIG DAY, MADAME PAULETTE, BRIDAL SPECIALIST, WILL CAREFULLY CLEAN AND RESTORE YOUR WEDDING GOWN."

BRIDE'S BEST FRIENDS

Manhattan's most romantic wedding site:

THE LIGHTHOUSE

A bit of old New York right on the Hudson



Enjoy your wedding dinner indoors or out

With waves lapping at the deck, wraparound windows and lively river views everywhere, The Lighthouse at Chelsea Piers offers an extraordinary experience: you truly feel you are aboard a luxury liner about to embark on a romantic ocean voyage. Once you pass through the entrance gates of The Lighthouse, you're in another world, recalling the warmth and charm of a more gracious time. Set amid a vibrant river panorama at the tip of Pier 61, Chelsea Piers, The Lighthouse is neither too large nor too small. 10,000 square feet of airy, flexible space provide the perfect setting for weddings and other events hosting 100 to 1,000.

If you wish, guests can enjoy your wedding dinner (or cocktails) completely outdoors on the spacious all-season terrace, a rarity in Manhattan party places. Like Pier Sixty, its adjacent sister site, The Lighthouse offers every luxury, all amenities and easy accessibility. Indoors or out, what further distinguishes The Lighthouse is the outstanding Abigail Kirsch cuisine and service.

Please call for an appointment. (212) 336-6146.

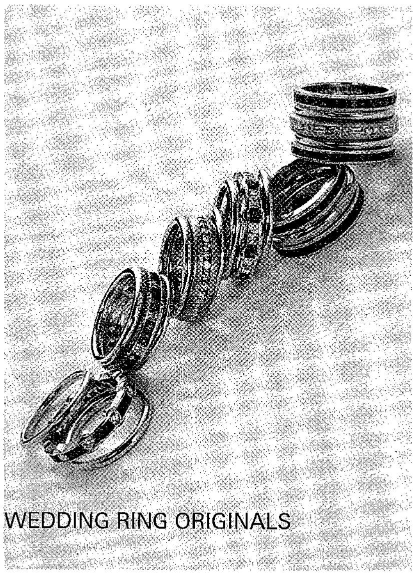
FINE FOOD BY ABIGAIL KIRSCH

The Lighthouse at Chelsea Piers, 23rd Street at the Hudson River, New York, NY 10011 ■ www.chelseapiers.com

CITY WEDDINGS

ALL THAT GLITTERS

Finding the right engagement ring and wedding bands amidst New York's many dazzling jewelry emporiums may seem a daunting prospect. Here are a few of the city's finest resources for rings that reflect the extraordinary diversity and quality found only in New York.



WEDDING RING ORIGINALS

WEDDING RING ORIGINALS

"While we display over 2,000 wedding and engagement rings, every ring is made to order," explains owner Mel Krumholtz of **Wedding Ring Originals** (674 Lexington Ave., 751-3940; www.weddingrings.com). The shop's comprehensive collection of wedding and engagement rings includes a vast range of styles that encompass Victorian, antique, Euro-modern, and traditional.

Wedding Ring Originals is on top of the latest trends. "Brides are very excited by an innovative new wedding band that resembles a vine encircling your finger. It can be worn on its own or with edges on either side," reports Krumholtz. What else is new? "Platinum and white metals are back in force and we are starting to see yellow gold accents with platinum or white gold. While emerald and princess-cut diamonds are gaining in popularity, round stones are still no. 1."

THE DIAMOND CO.

Every ring purchased at **The Diamond Co.**, a leading diamond wholesaler open to the public, (62 W. 47th St., Suite 1208, 819-0336 or 1-888-825-1233; www.thediamondco.com) is custom designed and created. "We never show our customers rings," states President Isaac Levy. "We first show the brides and grooms a selection of loose diamonds so they can clearly see what distinguishes each stone in terms of the color, the cut, and the shape. Once they have selected the right diamond, they decide on the mounting."

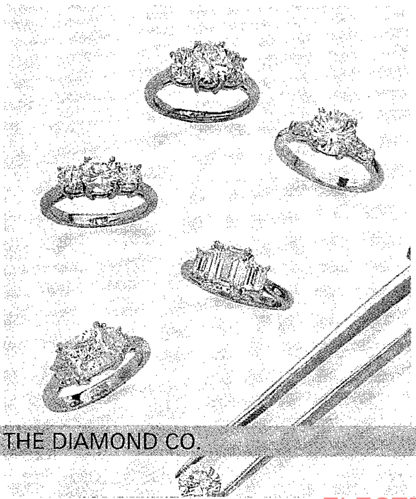
This season, one of the more popular styles is the Three Stones Ring symbolizing the past, present, and future. These rings are characterized by one big center diamond flanked on either side by smaller diamonds. A variety of shapes are being used for Three Stone Rings. Beyond the perennially favored round diamonds, brides are also selecting emerald, princess, and radiant cuts as the center stone, while half moons, bullets, trapezoids, and ovals are being used on either side. An appointment is necessary.

STARDUST ANTIQUES

Stardust Antiques (38 Gramercy Park on 21st St., 677-2590; www.stardustantiques.com), specializes in antique platinum and diamond engagement rings and wedding bands. "There is a certain romantic aspect to Stardust Antiques' turn-of-the-century and Art Deco rings that makes our store so unique," notes owner Ken Gold. Popular now are sapphire and diamond combinations, as well as round diamonds featured in a square setting. While you can view this unique ring collection on the store's Web site, there's something even more special about seeing these rings up close and personal.

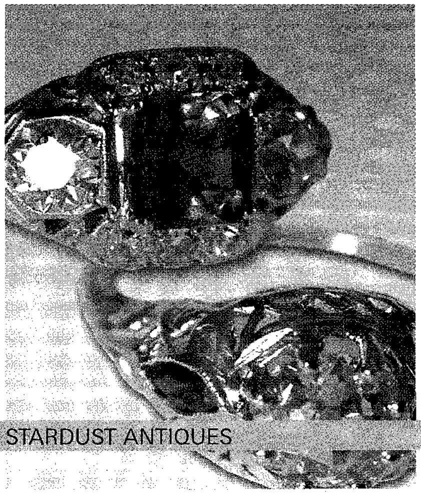
GALLERY ECLECTIC

Catherine Angiel's remarkable jewelry at **Gallery Eclectic** (43 Greenwich Ave., 924-4314; 27 Main St., Southampton, NY, 631-287-0463) is renowned for its



THE DIAMOND CO.

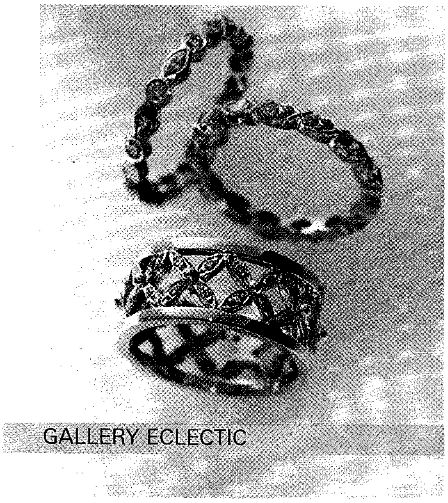
> "BEYOND THE PERENNIALLY FAVORED ROUND DIAMONDS, BRIDES ARE ALSO SELECTING EMERALD, PRINCESS, AND RADIANT CUTS AS THE CENTER STONE."



STARDUST ANTIQUES

photo: Sarah Merians Photography & Company

sophistication and the unique themes the designer incorporates into one-of-a-kind wedding and engagement rings. For example, "Bliss" is an exquisite diamond and gold petal-shaped ring with matching eternity bands. "Many brides prefer the simplicity of a combination engagement/wedding ring, and 'Bliss' fulfills that goal perfectly," notes Angiel, whose clientele includes Courteney Cox Arquette and Christian Slater.



GALLERY ECLECTIC

City Garden:

Within city limits and minutes from major bridges,
The Garden Terrace Room at The New York Botanical Garden brings the Garden inside with magnificent new murals.
Food, as always, is by the noted Abigail Kirsch.

Country Mansion:

So easy to get to, our splendid landmark mansion,
Tappan Hill in Tarrytown, is famous for its fabulous rotunda, river views and superb Abigail Kirsch food and service.

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THE GIFT REGISTRY

Registering for your wedding should be fun. And easy. Here are very diverse registries that do just that.

THE REGISTRY AT BLOOMINGDALE'S

"We now offer couples and their guests the most comprehensive, seamless way to register and shop for gifts. Our new online partnership with weddingchannel.com has enhanced our bridal registry enormously," reports Susan Miller, vice president of shopping services for **Bloomingdale's.** (1000 Third Ave., New York City store registry: 705-3340; toll free 1-800-888-2WED; 23 stores nationwide at the Web site, www. bloomingdales.weddingchannel.com) There are a variety of ways to register. Couples may come in to Bloomingdale's and make their selections online with the assistance of a bridal consultant or self register by walking around the store using a hand-held scanner gun to register. They can also make any changes to their registry over the phone or online. Guests will find it very convenient to shop online, via the 800 number, or in person.

Beyond the ease of registering and shopping, Bloomingdale's has an enormous selection of products, styles, and price points. "Couples today are registering for much more than just china, silver, and crystal," notes Miller. "They want bed and bath items, luggage, furniture, and home accessories including frames, pillows, and vases. Bloomingdale's make it as easy as possible."

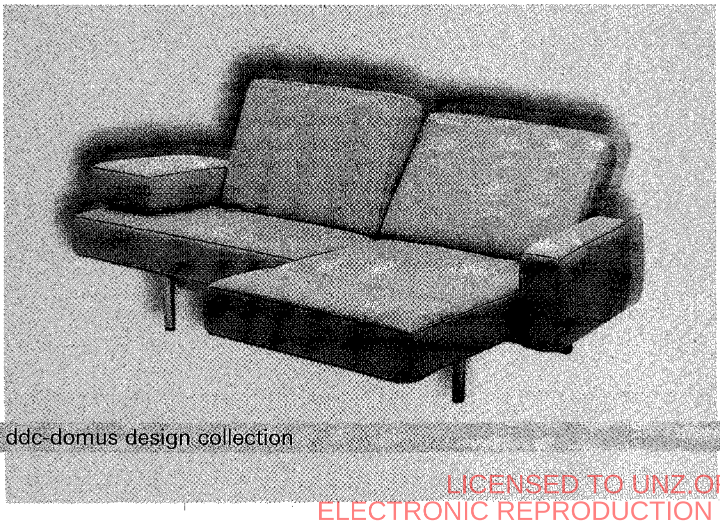
OMINGDALE'S

NANCY KOLTES AT HOME

Nancy Koltes at Home (31 Spring St.; 219-227; www.nancykoltes.com), is a jewel-sized NoLita shop selling an inspired collection of home accessories that epitomize a sophisticated, contemporary, yet comfortable and relaxed lifestyle. After just one year in business, Nancy Koltes at Home is celebrating by expanding its product line and opening a shop in South Beach. In addition to the shop's Nancy Koltes linens and Scandia Down products, brides and grooms may now register for table linens, dinnerware, glassware, bath accessories, and loungewear. "We have really evolved into a complete lifestyle shop in response to our clients' needs," explains Andrew Sedlock, vice president of merchandising. "Our Bridal Registry really strives for the personal one-on-one service that has become so rare."

HOME STYLE

"For newlyweds who are setting up their first homes together, our extensive line of exclusive, contemporary European home furnishings provides a wide variety of choice," explains Seemak Hakakian of **ddc-domus design collection** (181 Madison Ave. at 34th street, 685-0800; www.ddcnyc.com). "Today, couples often come into marriage with firm ideas of what they like and don't like. Our wide selection of furniture, lighting, and rugs makes it easy for them to find pieces they will both like. Furthermore, our on-site design staff will help couples select the right pieces and even custom design furniture." Shopping at ddc-domus design collection is an inspiring experience. Since May, the company has been housed in a dramatic, 30,000 square-foot Philip Johnson-designed three-story showroom. Soaring ceilings and curved walls showcase New York's most extensive line of sophisticated, cutting-edge


ddc-domus design collection

> "COUPLES WANT BED AND BATH ITEMS, LUGGAGE, FURNITURE, AND HOME ACCESSORIES INCLUDING FRAMES, PILLOWS, AND VASES."

photo: Fred Marcus Photography

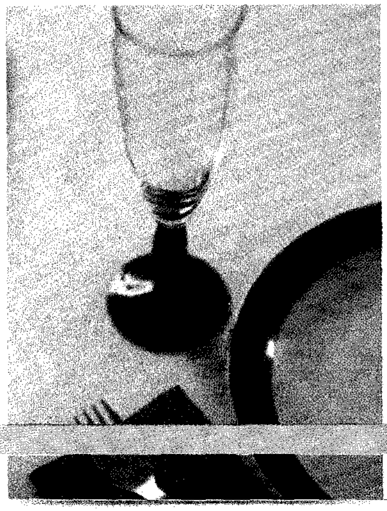
European furnishings. For newlywed New Yorkers who are short on space, but long on design sense, ddc-domus design collection has a large selection of sleep sofas, storage beds, and extension tables.

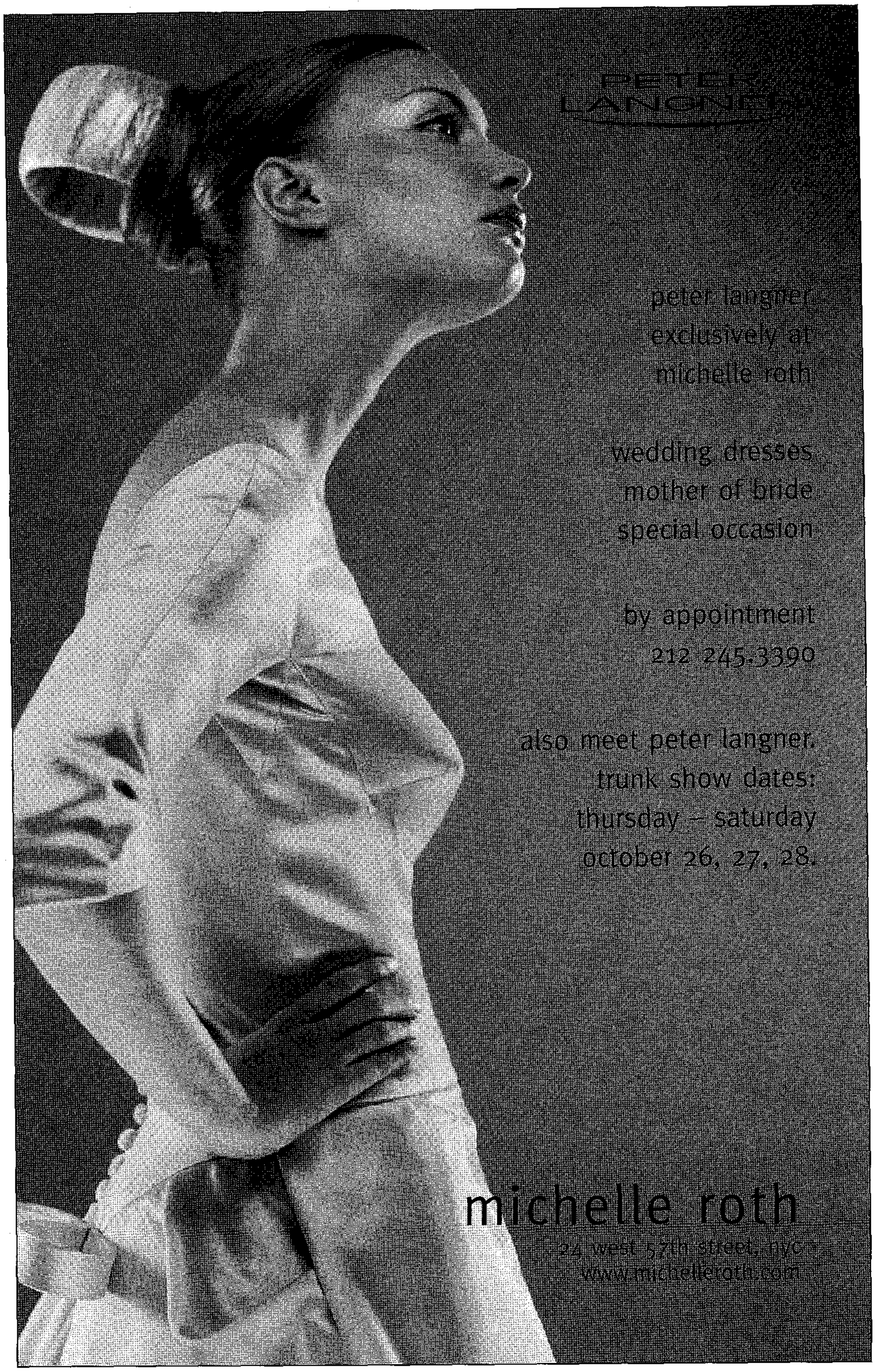
INSPIRED INVITATIONS

Set the tone for your wedding with invitations that reflect the mood or theme of the occasion. This first step signals to guests just how you are planning the event—from a casual outdoor event to an elegant city affair.

ALPINE CREATIVE GROUP

Alpine Creative Group's (159 W. 25th St., 989-4198 or 1-800-289-6507; www.alpineinvite.com), newly





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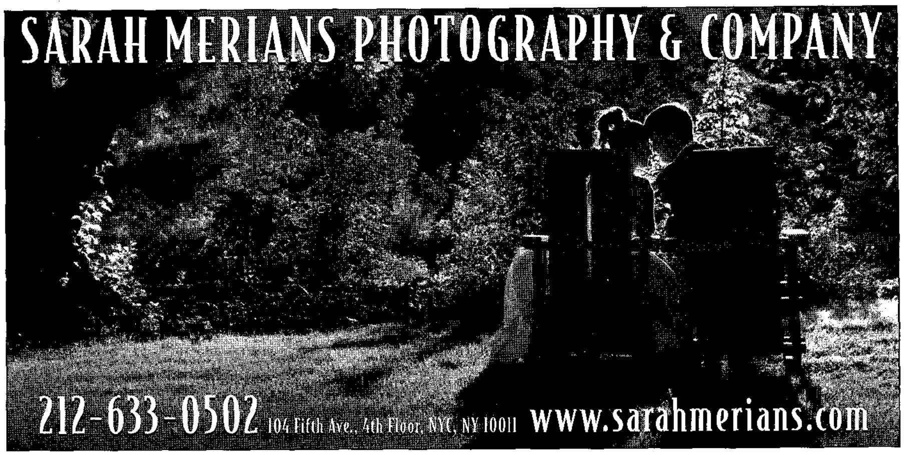

SARAH MERIANS PHOTOGRAPHY & COMPANY

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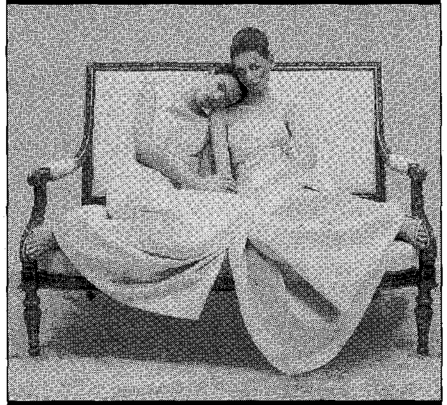
The Bridal Party
Dresses for Bridesmaids
243 East 82nd St · NYC · (212) 861-2318

A bridesmaid shop that has everything New York has to offer
except the sales tax...



Vera Wang • Nicole Miller
Watters & Watters • Jim Hjelm
Dessy and more
call for a personal appointment
Bride's Best Friends
11 East Palisade Ave. Englewood, NJ
201.541.1333

re-designed Web site is a terrific introduction to the company's full line of invitations and other printed materials for weddings, bridal showers, engagement parties, and other special occasions. Eventually the Web site will have e-commerce capabilities.

"Once our clients have seen the Web site, we encourage them to phone for a private appointment so they can really see and feel the full range of design possibilities available here," explains president Laura Leigh. Alpine Creative Group prides itself on personal attention and creating a product that captures the spirit and theme for each client's special occasion. "Our in-house graphic design group can create a complete custom design or just add a flourish such as a special paper, ribbon, or decorative leaf to enhance a stock invitation."

EVENT PLANNING EXPERTS

Long on vision but short on time? These wedding planning experts will turn your dream wedding into a reality right here in New York, the Hamptons, or wherever you desire.

ELEGANT OCCASIONS

"**Elegant Occasions** (100 Park Ave., Suite 6200, 704-0048 or 1-888-361-9177; www.elegantoccasions.com, e-mail: elegwed204@aol.com) is a full service event planning company that makes every event a memorable one," explains President JoAnn Gregoli, who is also the New York Metro Coordinator for the Association of Bridal Consultants. The company has planned weddings all over the country for a number of celebrities including the June 2000 wedding for Michael Gelman, executive producer of *Live with Regis*, and Laurie Hibberd, entertainment reporter for CBS' *The Early Show.*

Elegant Occasions plans and executes every aspect of a wedding. "We'll start with a personal meeting with the bride and groom wherever it's most convenient for them, whether it's their office or their home. They depend on us for everything," continues Gregoli. Many weddings that Elegant Occasions plans are destination events that last entire weekends. "We do weddings in New York, California, the Hamptons, Aspen, and the Caribbean. From Thursday evening welcome cocktails to Sunday farewell brunches, we plan every detail. Our brides and grooms become guests at their own wedding."

HAMPTON WEDDING™

"We have developed a multi-tiered approach to wedding planning so that

ALPINE CREATIVE GROUP

we are able to work with couples of different styles and budgets," explains partners **Jill Gordon** and **Corinne Strauss** of **Hampton Wedding** (New York: 369-3915, Hamptons: 631-537-3833; www.hamptonwedding. com), which specializes in weddings on Long Island's idyllic eastern end.

Corinne and Jill offer complete wedding planning for couples that want the expertise of Hampton Wedding from the first consultation right up the big event. For those who do not need full-service wedding planning, Hampton Wedding will design a customized wedding plan for brides and grooms to follow on their own. After an initial consult, Corinne and Jill provide a customized wedding plan that features budget breakdown, a planning schedule, and *The Hampton Wedding Guide* with specially selected referrals (including florists, caterers, spaces, entertainment, photographers, and more) that match the couple's style and budget. Finally, Hampton Wedding has a plan designed to help couples during the month leading up to the wedding and includes on-site management on the wedding day.

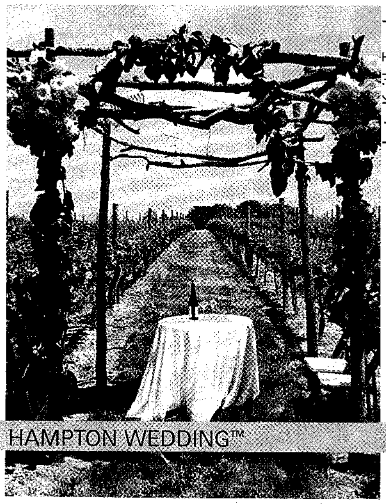


photo:Keith Trumbo

HAMPTON WEDDING™

nicole miller

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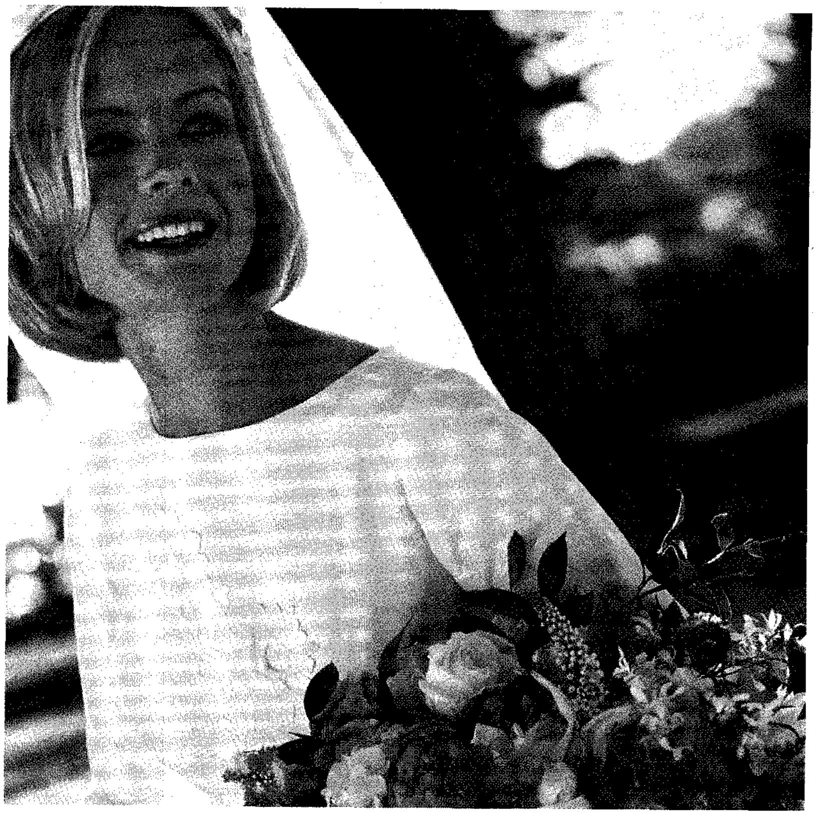


THE LOOK

A bride wants to look and feel spectacular on her wedding day. Consult these leading New York salons to create a truly special look for your wedding.

INTERNATIONAL HAIR SALON

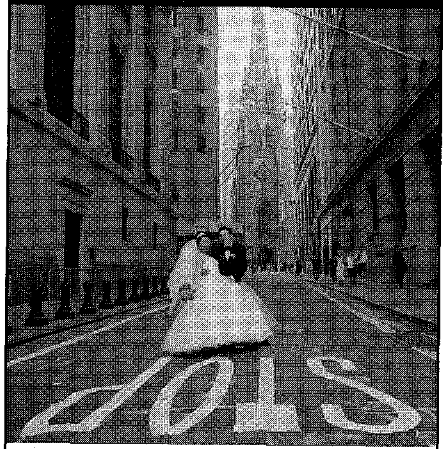
International Hair Salon (48 E. 43rd St., 2nd floor, 883-6620; call for other locations in Westchester and Stamford, CT; www.internationalhairsalon.com) specializes in a unique "hair addition" procedure for solving fine and thinning hair problems. Also offered: extensions, wigs, color, and traditional salon services. Now at an exciting, new, 3,000 square-foot location, International Hair Salon also provides facials, manicures, and makeup services for you and your bridal party for the most important time of your life.

LEMETRIC HAIR CENTER FOR WOMEN

LeMetric Hair Center for Women (124 E. 40th St. Suite 601, 986-5620 or 1-800-217-9052; wwwlemetric.com) focuses on women who have lost their hair or who have thinning hair. "Our specialty is making the bride look and feel extra spe-

> "THIS IS YOUR MOMENT TO SHINE. ALL EYES—AND CAMERAS—WILL BE FOCUSED ON YOU. HERE'S HOW TO GET THE LOOK YOU'VE ALWAYS DREAMED OF FOR YOUR SPECIAL DAY. PERFECT HAIR, MAKEUP, SKIN CARE IS YOURS."

"Honey, I'm sorry, I don't know where the limo is."



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cial on the big day. We give more than just hair—we offer the style and a look that makes a statement on one of the most important days of a bride's life," says owner Elline Surianello. LeMetric can give brides, their mother, or other women the fuller-looking head of hair they always dreamed of for the wedding day and beyond.

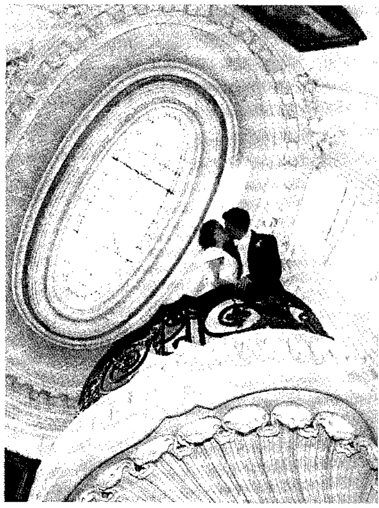


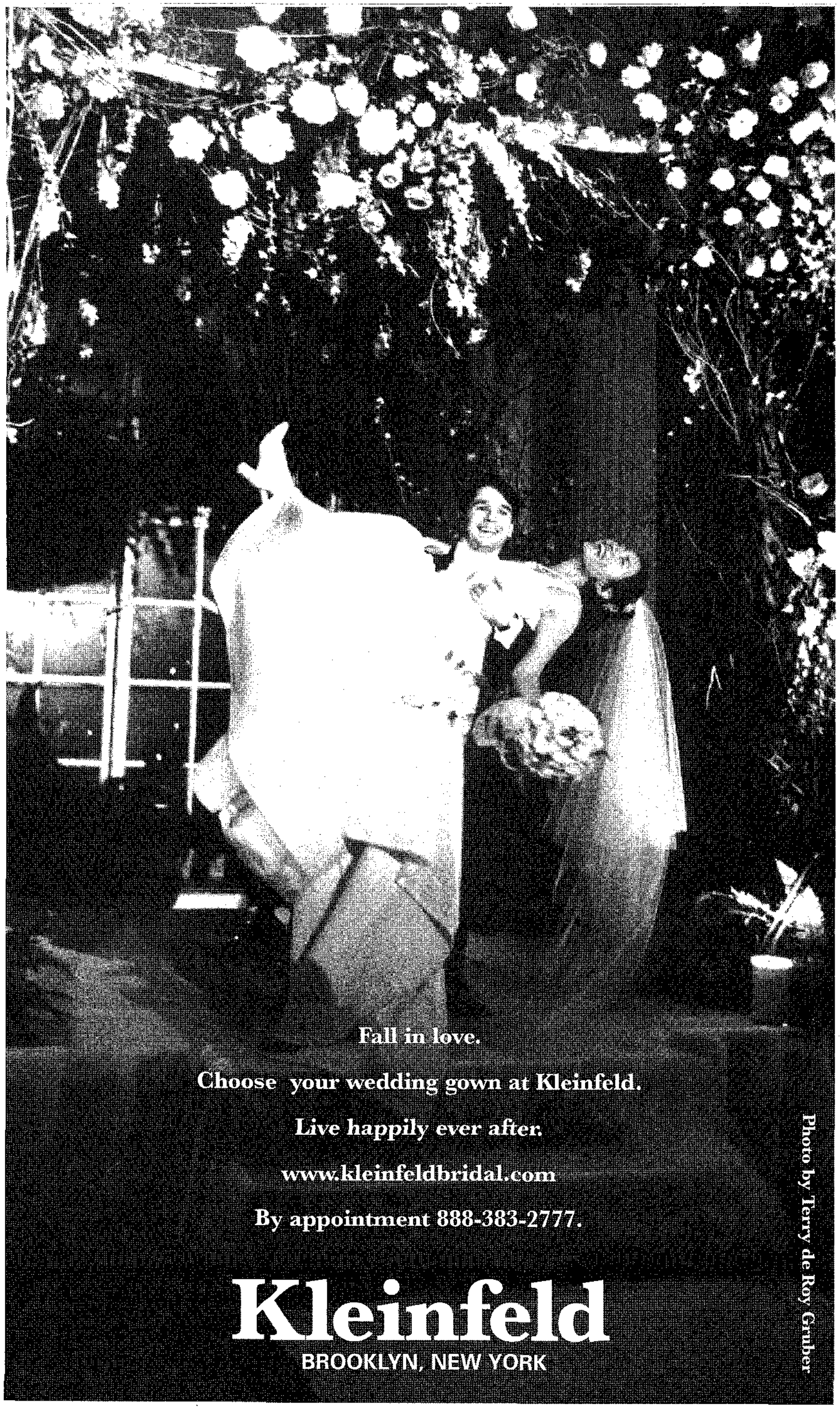
photo: Sarah Merians Photography & Company

CAPTURE THE DAY IN PICTURES

Long after your wedding is over, you will be able to relive the day in pictures. These photographers will bring your memories to life in black and white and full color.

SARAH MERIANS PHOTOGRAPHY & COMPANY

At Sarah Merians Photography & Company (104 Fifth Ave., 4th floor, 633-0502; www.sarahmerians.com), you can choose from among a staff of 13 unique photographers, each of whom offers a distinctive style, ranging from traditional to photojournalistic. "Couples choose the photographer who best reflects their personal style," says Merians, herself an accomplished photographer. "We are with you every step of the



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How about dinner after the show? Let's take the kids out - where should we go?

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NEW YORK MAGAZINE

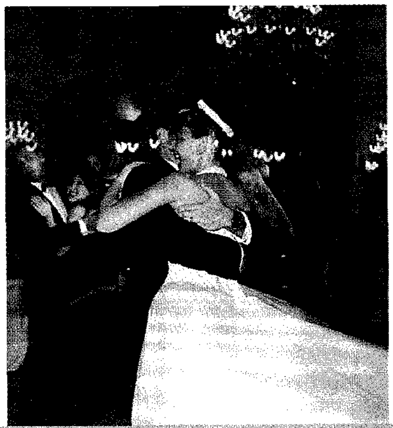
CITYWEDDINGS

photo: Sarah Merians Photography & Company

way–from the engagement portrait to the finished artistic album." Visit the studio or Web site to view samples.

FRED MARCUS PHOTOGRAPHY

"We combine black-and-white photojournalism with traditional color photography to create two unique looks for each wedding. Brides and grooms love it," explains Andy Marcus, president of **Fred Marcus Photography** (245 W. 72nd St., 873-5588; www.fredmarcus.com), the photographer exclusively recommended by both the Pierre and The Plaza hotels. After sixty years in the business, Fred Marcus Photography knows what brides and grooms want. "We're all now doing weddings for the third generation of clients," continues Marcus. For couples that want a wedding video, Fred Marcus will provide a finished product in the traditional VHS format or the more technologically advanced DVD. Visit the company's Web site to view photographs of parties covered by Marcus.



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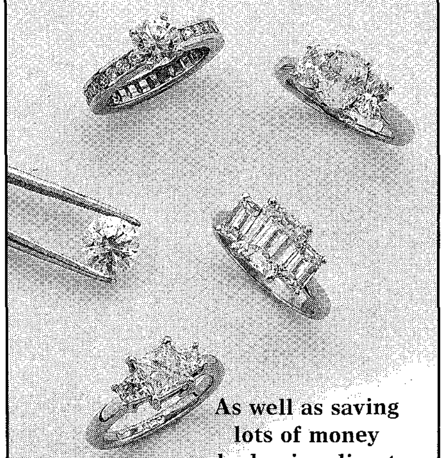

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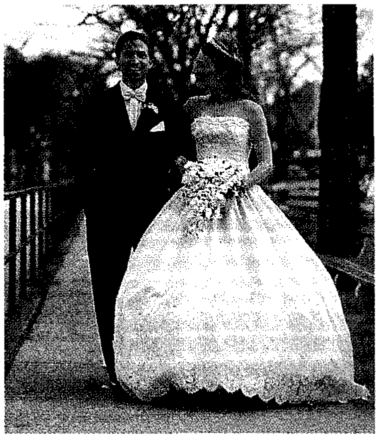
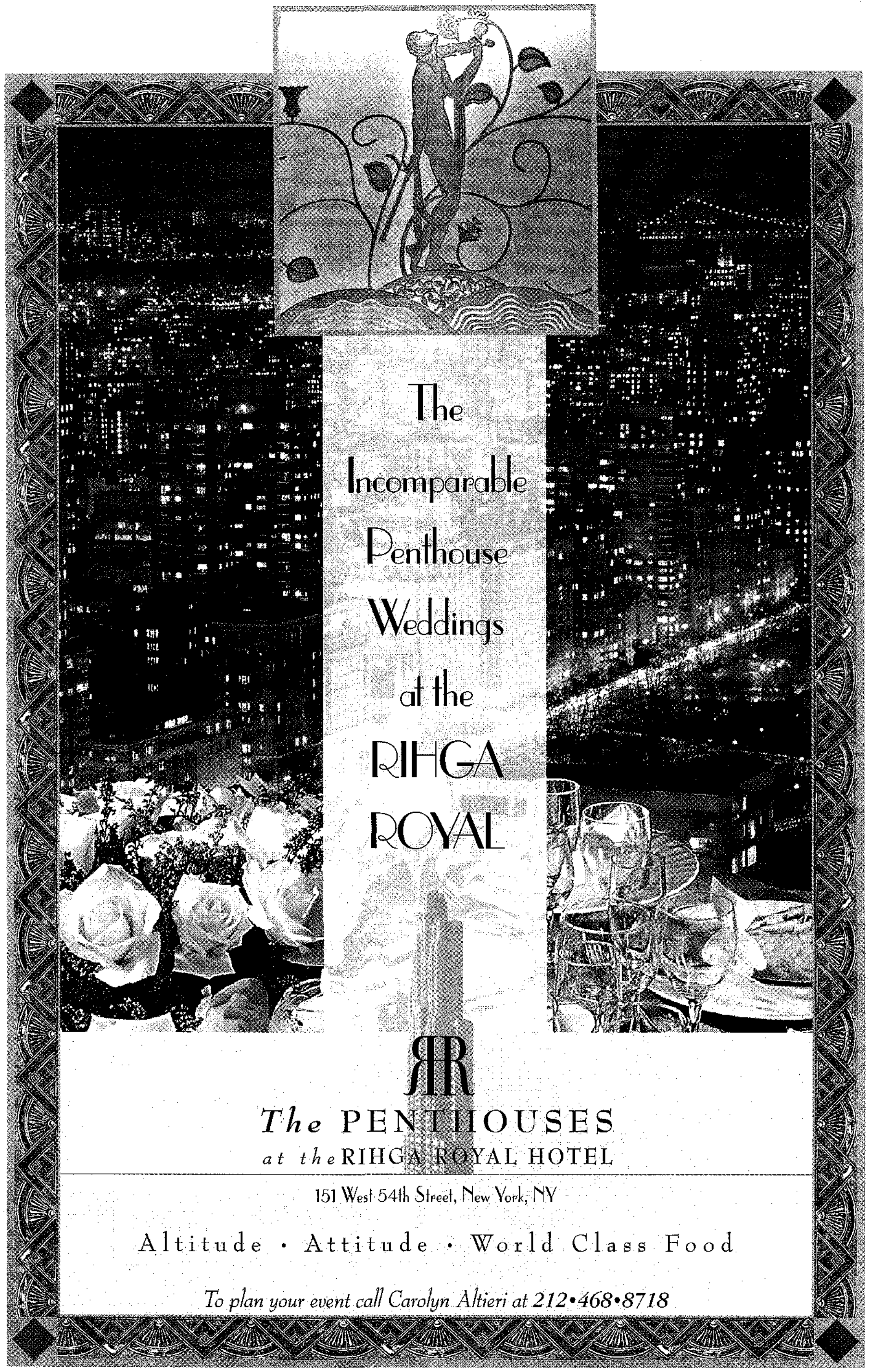


photo: Fred Marcus Photography

> BLACK-AND-WHITE AND PHOTOJOURNALISTIC SHOTS ARE COMBINED WITH COLOR TO CAPTURE EVERY MOOD.

photo: Fred Marcus Photography



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"Ken Gross Orchestras (1-800-688-4480) creates a fabulous party," says Juilliard-trained bandleader Ken Gross "by performing a customized mix of music with pizazz that fills the dance floor with guests of all ages." In addition to his own busy orchestra, Gross offers popular groups such as Silk & Soul and the Sean Mahony Orchestra. Their musicianship and vocals are rated top-notch as is their mastery of a broad range of music including swing, standards, contemporary, Motown, and R&B, plus a variety of ethnic styles.

photo: Sarah Merians Photography & Company

> "NOTHING SETS THE STAGE FOR A WONDERFUL WEDDING LIKE THE SOUNDS OF A TERRIFIC BAND. HERE, ONE OF NEW YORK'S FINEST HELPS GET YOUR GUESTS UP ON THE DANCE-FLOOR. A WIDE RANGE OF STYLES MAKES THE PARTY."

SARAH MERIANS PHOTOGRAPHY & COMPANY

A RESTAURANT IS A GREAT PLACE TO CELEBRATE!

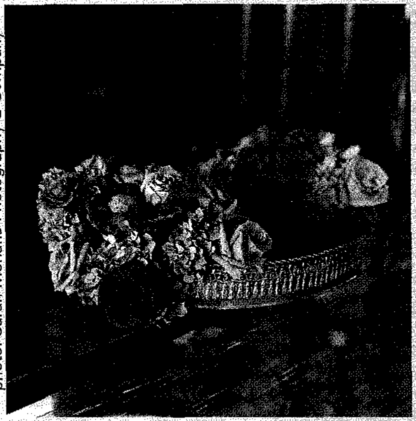

photo: Sarah Merians Photography & Company

For an engagement party, shower, or other wedding celebration, let one of New York City's fine restaurants and the **American Express® Card** make planning easy.

Once you've found the perfect space, atmosphere, and menu just add your guest list and present the American Express Card...And then treat yourself to something you really want with the *Membership Rewards®* points you earn. The accompanying list offers some great suggestions for your party in New York City:

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Hudson Theatre at Millennium Broadway	212-789-7583
Tribeca Grill	212-941-3905
Tse Yang	212-688-5447
Eleven Madison Park	212-889-2535 ext. 140
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Sono	212-752-7470 ext.15
San Domenico	212-265-5959
Tapika	212-608-7400
Rossini's Restaurant	212-683-0135
Mr. K's	212-583-1668
Caffe Grazie	212-717-4407
Conservatory Café	212-641-1173 or 212-641-1192
Nirvana Restaurant	212-486-5700
Windows on the World	212-524-7033
City Hall Restaurant	212-227-7777
Dish of Salt	212-921-4242
Ellen's Stardust Diner	212-956-5151
St. Maggie's Café	212-943-9050
Rodeo	212-683-6500
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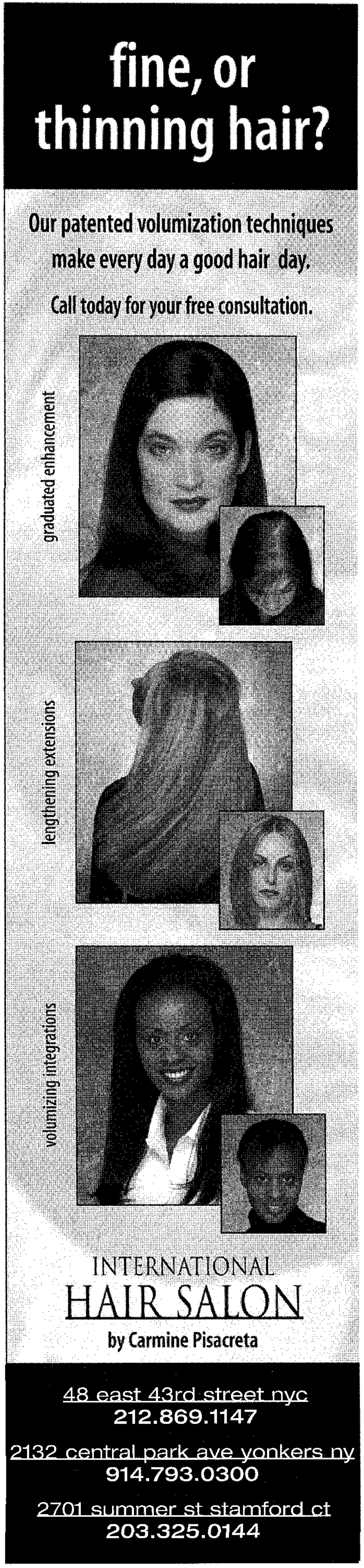
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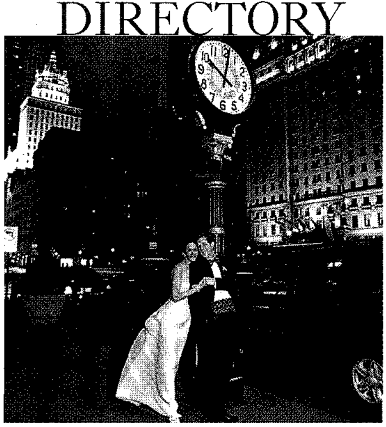


photo: Sarah Merians Photography & Company

Only New York could provide brides and grooms with such a dazzling array of wedding venues. There are penthouse suites with panoramic Manhattan views, sumptuous hotel ballrooms, extraordinary riverside spaces, magnificent garden and park settings, and dynamic restaurants. All are renowned for impeccable food and service. Their one common goal: to make your wedding the most special and magical occasion of your life.

ABIGAIL KIRSCH AT THE LIGHTHOUSE CHELSEA PIERS

23rd St. and the Hudson River, 336-6146; www.chelseapiers.com/lighthouse

Manhattan's newest waterfront wedding site, The Lighthouse is set amidst a vibrant Hudson River panorama at the tip of Pier 61 at Chelsea Piers. With waves lapping at the deck, wrap-around windows, and river views everywhere, The Lighthouse offers an extraordinary experience–you feel as if you are aboard a luxury liner about to embark on a romantic ocean voyage. The Lighthouse offers 10,000 square- feet of airy, flexible space for weddings and other events hosting 100 to 1,000. In addition, there is a large all-season terrace available for dinner or cocktails outdoors.

ABIGAIL KIRSCH AT THE NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN

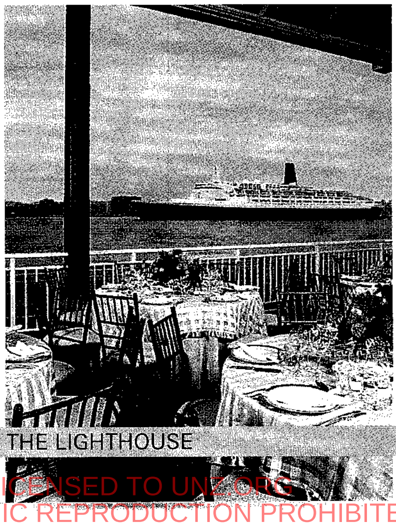
200th St. and Southern Blvd., NY, 718-220-0300; www.abigailkirsch.com

Just 25 minutes from Manhattan, The Garden Terrace Room at The New York Botanical Garden, with its high ceilings and high Palladian style windows, brings the glories of The Garden inside with magnificent murals. Under the aegis of Abigail Kirsch, the food and service is impeccable. Open year-round with an outdoor chapel area, The Garden Terrace Room accommodates up to 350 for a seated dinner and dancing or 600 for a cocktail reception.

ABIGAIL KIRSCH AT TAPPAN HILL

81 Highland Ave., Tarrytown, NY, 914-631-3030; www.abigailkirsch.com

Landmark mansion overlooking the


THE LIGHTHOUSE

NEW YORK BOTANICAL GARDEN

Hudson River with dazzling views on an estate once owned by Mark Twain, this romantic country setting is just 45 minutes from Manhattan. It offers outdoor ceremony areas, rolling lawns, and the superb food and service of Abigail Kirsch. Serves 290 for dinner and dancing and up to 600 for a cocktail reception.

ASTRA

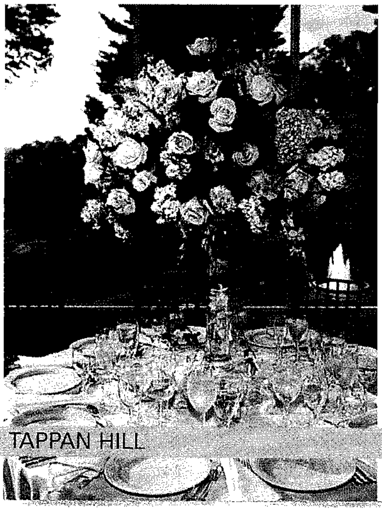
979 Third Ave.
(D&D Building, 14th floor),
212-644-9394; www.astraevents.com

Astra is a full-service catering company and private entertaining space that is a division of Charlie Palmer's critically acclaimed restaurant Aureole. This beautifully appointed, versatile space has a lovely outdoor terrace and will accommodate weddings for 140 for a sit-down dinner and up to 300 for cocktails. Unrivaled cuisine, and hands-on, personalized service makes Astra a perfect choice for a New York wedding. Astra will also cater weddings held in other venues.

MANHATTAN PENTHOUSE ON FIFTH AVENUE

80 Fifth Ave., 17th floor, 627-8838;
www.mansionscatering.com

Just west of Union Square, this glamorous and airy penthouse has giant



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MÉTRAZUR

East Balcony, Grand Central Terminal, 687-4600; www.metrazur.com

This sleek American brasserie overlooking the main space at Grand Central Terminal is a decidedly new and exciting spot for an urban wedding. Executive chef Charlie Palmer of Aureole fame and designer Calvin Tsao have together created a haven of fine cuisine in a stunning setting. Brides and grooms can plan sit-down dinner wedding receptions for 150 or cocktail receptions for up to 400.

METRONOME

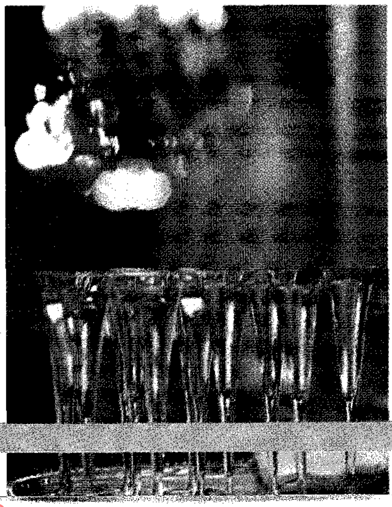
915 Broadway at 21st Street, 505-7400; www.metronomenyc.com

This hip Flatiron restaurant is one of the city's most popular new spots for one-of-a-kind weddings that can accommodate up to 360 guests for a sit-down dinner. Elegant lighting; oak, terrazzo, and custom carpet floors; a color palette of amber, coppery gold, and shades of pale olive; 19-foot columns; hand-painted ceilings, and wrap-around windows create a dramatic backdrop for your special event. Sumptuous Mediterranean cuisine, access to the best music acts in town, and a full-service catering staff make Metronome the place for traditional and non-traditional weddings.

RIHGA ROYAL HOTEL

151 W. 54th St., Call Carolyn Altieri, director of catering; 468-8710; www.rihga.com)

Evoking the romantic spirit, style, and sophistication of the Art Deco era, the RIHGA's two penthouses—The Gershwin and The Majestic—offer stunning, panoramic views of Manhattan. Wedding ceremonies are held in the 54th floor Majestic penthouse.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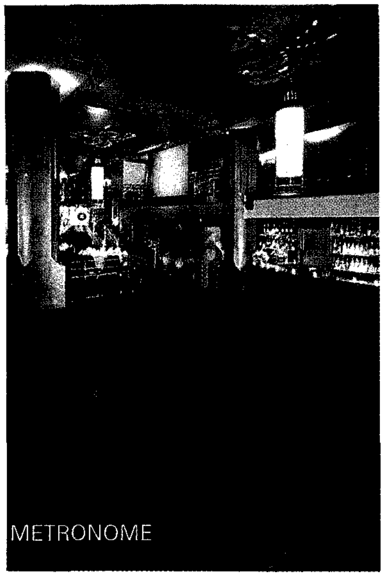

METRONOME

The wedding celebration then continues in one of the 53rd floor Gershwin penthouses, which can accommodate up to 130 for an elegant sit-down dinner and dancing reception. New Executive chef David Adjey has completely redesigned the RIHGA's menus and will create a sumptuous menu for your wedding. (Tasting dinners are available as you plan your wedding). Executive pastry chef Paul Steindler will create the wedding cake of your dreams. Complete packages include a complimentary honeymoon evening in one of the hotel's Grand Royal Suites. The RIHGA makes the suite available early for the bride and her bridal party.

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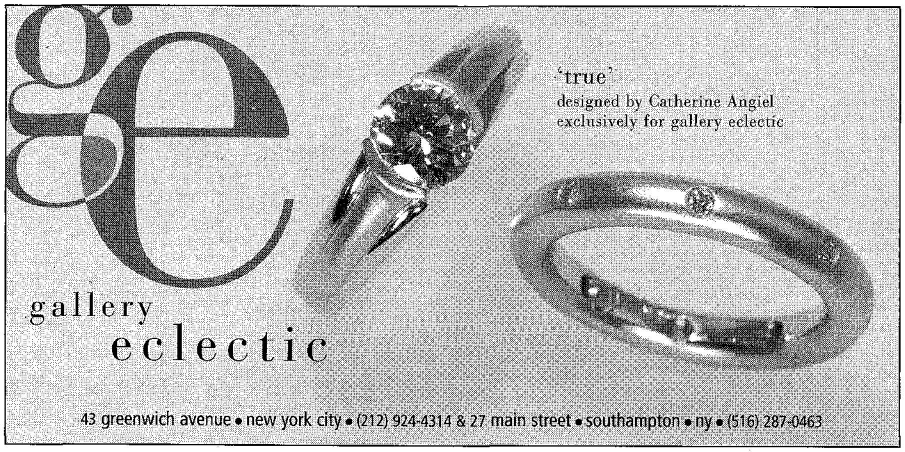

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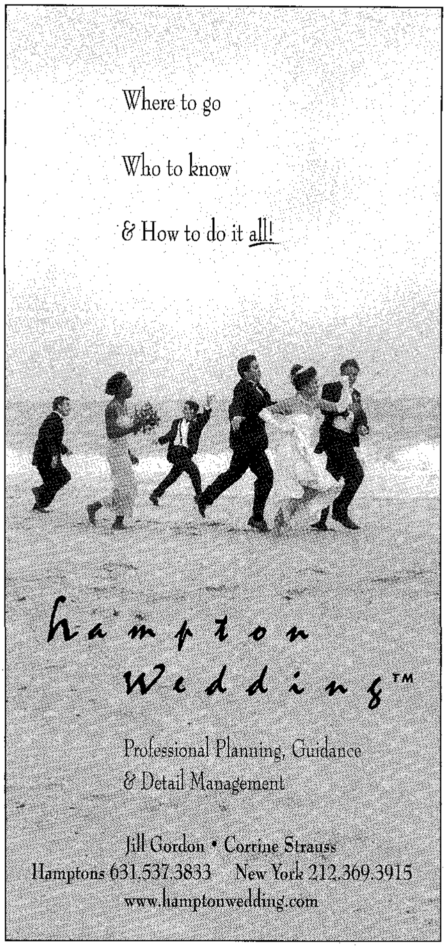

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150 W. 57th St., 974-2111;
www.russiantearoom.com

A New York legend since 1926, the Russian Tea Room reopened in 1999 after Warner LeRoy (of Tavern on the Green fame) spent $20 million and three-and-a-half years to restore this 57th street landmark to its proper glory. Weddings are held in romantic spaces on the third and fourth floors. The third floor Bear Ball Room is a stunning space designed to hold up to 312 for a sit-down dinner. Dancing bears are etched into mirror-lined walls and gaze down from magnificent chandeliers. Tiffany stained-glass ceilings hail from Warner LeRoy's Maxwell's Plum. The fourth floor party spaces–the Balcony Room, the Hearth Room, and the Empire Room–may be used separately for more intimate weddings or combined to hold up to 190. The chef specializes in traditional Russian cuisine with a lighter French flair. A complete wedding staff stands ready to create a magical wedding in this reborn Manhattan legend.

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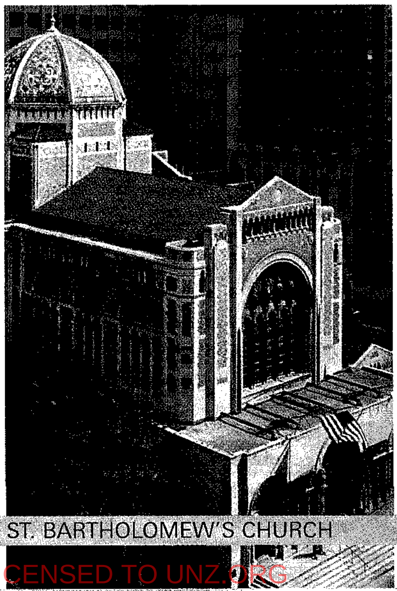

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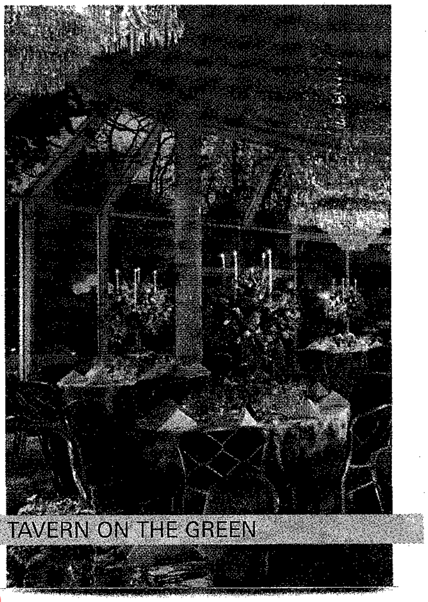

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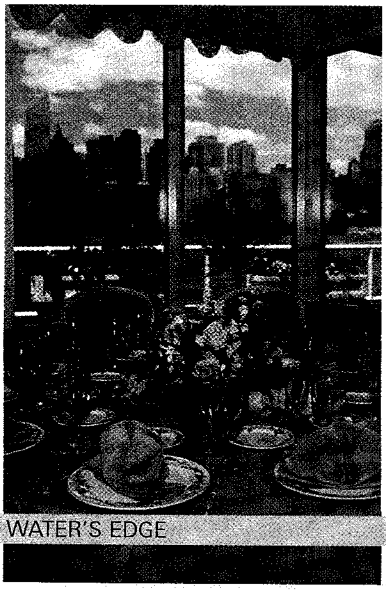

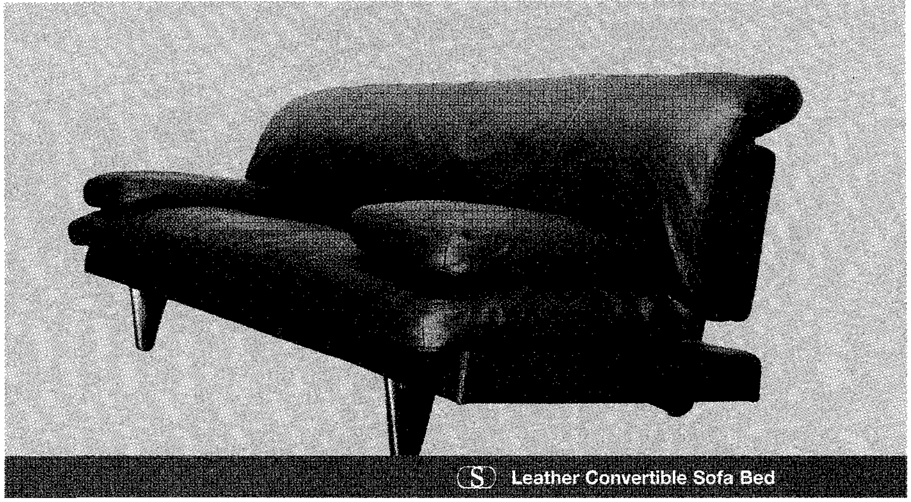

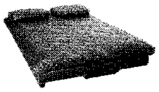

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Pup Fiction

In his hilarious mock documentary about the self-obsessed world of dog-show contestants, Christopher Guest finds the humanity beneath the absurdity.

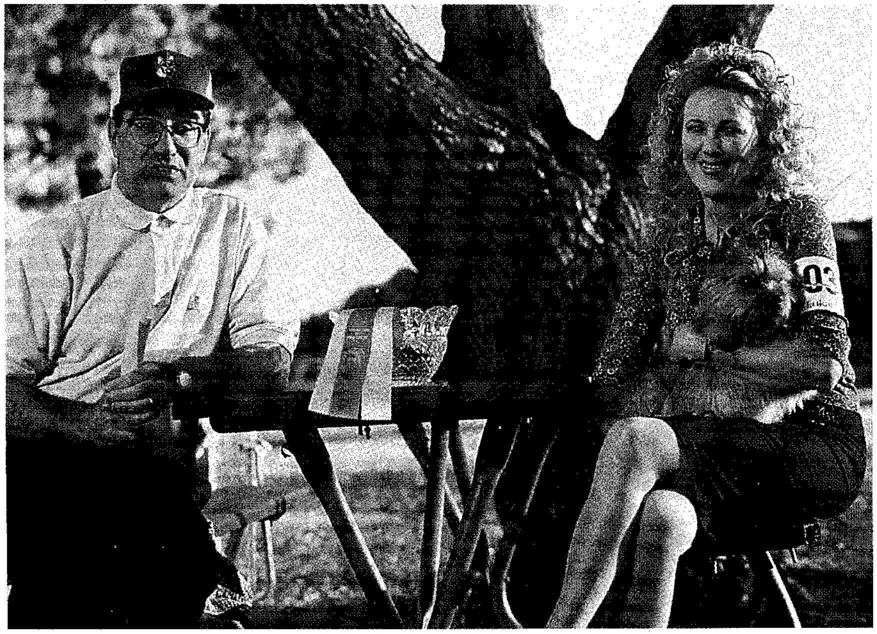
SEVERAL YEARS AGO, I STOPPED OFF AT A MOTEL in Massachusetts and discovered that about half of the other guests had checked in for the night with their prize canines. Exotic, fluffy breeds were paraded behind the motel in preparation for a regional dog show the following day. None of the owners, or handlers, showed the slightest regard for anybody else, least of all the other entrants; they had the sniffy disdain that royalty exhibits for pretenders to the crown. The dogs, even after being enclosed in cages for the night, shared in this hauteur. They wouldn't even deign to bark, and they probably were better-fed than most of the motel staff.

The bizarreness of this episode came back to me as I watched **Best in Show**, which is about contestants vying for the top prize at a major dog show in Philadelphia. The film, which was directed by Christopher Guest—who also stars in it and was co-writer with Eugene Levy—captures the preening and the deep-down silliness (though not to its participants) of the world-within-a-world of dog contests. Guest actually staged his own show with his cast members mixed in with real handlers and judges, and the verisimilitude makes everything seem even funnier. We've entered a specialized universe that nonetheless seems instantly recognizable; the procession of egos on display during the Mayflower Dog Show is flabbergasting in the same way that, say, the Oscars or the Tonys are. The perfectly coiffed dogs trotted out for our delectation are almost comically beautiful, and so, in their loopy narcissism, are their owners. It's not just that many of them look like their dogs. Maneuvering their canines through their motions, they *are* their dogs.

Guest uses the same kind of improvisational, mock-documentary structure as in his last film, *Waiting For Guffman,* which was about the staging of a small-town musical and featured Guest as Off–Off Broadway director-in-exile Corky St. Clair, with his flamer's flamboyance and gumption. Guest plays Harlan Pepper in *Best in Show,* a fly-fishing-shop owner from Pine Nut, North Carolina, who has high hopes for his bloodhound, Hubert. He's absolutely convincing, right down to the slow, syrupy drawl and heavy-lidded peepers. There's a touch of the grandee about Harlan. Guest isn't just a revue-sketch comic; he's a real actor, perhaps a great one. Most comic actors start with a character and then fine-tune it to caricature. Guest reverses the process: He gives you someone you think you can size up at a glance, then proceeds to add layer upon layer. Guest allows his performers a great deal of latitude in this film, and many of them are pungent, peerless jokesters, but he gives himself over to his own role with a steel-willed commitment that's unlike anything I've ever seen in a comic actor of his generation. Guest's Harlan believes he exists on a spiritual plane with his pet. When he shows Hubert off before the judges, he lopes beside him in a contrapuntal prance. Hubert and Harlan have the same red hair and the same big-limbed grace and winsome dogginess; they might be different swatches of the same species.

Guest shot the film in super 16-mm., mostly with handheld cameras, and the technique allows the performers to work up their characters right in front of us. Much more footage was shot than made it into the movie, but the cut-and-paste randomness is part of the fun; the tantrums and the silliness on display don't have that prepared-for feeling common to so many movie comedies. Lots of comics from the *SCTV* and *Saturday Night Live* generation have made it into the movies, but most of their films feel straitjacketed by stale dramatic ploys derived from Broadway and sitcoms. Guest is one of the few filmmakers who recognize that if you want to capture some of that original improvisational freshness, you need to carry over the impromptu spirit into the act of filmmaking itself.

Guest has a relish for eccentricity that seems more deeply British than American. He's not interested in normalcy. The cast of characters in *Best in Show* are a gaggle of silly gooses and dolts and dauphins, and Guest lavishes his sincerest sympathies on them. (The nuttier they are, the more affection he shows.) The yuppie lawyers Meg and Hamilton Swan (Parker Posey and Michael Hitchcock) fear their own relationship



Ruff trade: Eugene Levy and Catherine O'Hara (with their prize-winning dog) in *Best of Show.*

Photograph by Wren Maloney/Castle Rock Entertainment.

problems are turning their sleek, imperially mopey weimaraner, Beatrice, into a head case. Their almost psychotic indulgence of Beatrice is all of a piece with the way they shop by mail-order catalogue only; in both cases, the less contact with people, the better. Gerry and Cookie Fleck (Eugene Levy and Catherine O'Hara), with their Norwich terrier, Winky, are so mismatched that they seem perfectly harmonious together, like the fittings in a Cubist painting. A menswear salesman, Gerry is owlish and buck-toothed and always a beat behind the scattered sensuality of his wife, who keeps encountering old boyfriends on the trek from their home in Florida to Philadelphia. The guys from her checkered past have such disdain for Gerry that they practically drool on her in his presence. Cookie has chosen the sedate life, and yet she's piqued by their attentions; she enjoys being in heat again.

There's also professional handler Scott Donlan (John Michael Higgins) and his longtime partner, hair-salon owner Stefan Vanderhoof (Michael McKean), and their Shih Tzu, Miss Agnes. These two turn their Philly hotel room into a casbah of kimonos and silk, and treat the Mayflower procession as a fashion show. In the most touchingly deranged moment in the movie, Stefan sings a lullaby, "Barbara Allen," to Miss Agnes's partner, Tyrone (named after Tyrone Power), over the phone. I could have done with a bit less of the butch-bimbo combo (Jane Lynch and Jennifer Coolidge) and their poodle, but providing the Mayflower Dog Show's play-by-play is Fred Willard as broadcast announcer Buck Laughlin, and he steals the movie whenever his motormouth is running, which is most of the time. (In this elite company, stealing the movie is grand theft indeed.) Laughlin's Joe Garagiola–ish bonhomie can't disguise the fact that he doesn't begin to know what he's talking about, though he's blithely unfazed by his own cluelessness. In his own blockhead way, Laughlin gets right to the down-and-dirty point: The stream of idiocies he spouts are like the thoughts we might have while watching the dog show if we let our id run wild. (He has fun wrapping his mouth around *Shih Tzu.*)

Most contemporary comedies are so timorous when it comes to being politically incorrect, or else so in-your-face about it, that *Best in Show,* with its deadpan incivilities, is practically a comedy of manners by comparison. It indulges our worst suspicions about the way people behave, but it's also a tribute to how screw-loose we can be. The real prize specimens in this movie parade about on two legs, not four. ▬

Peter Rainer's reviews are available at **newyorkmag.com**.

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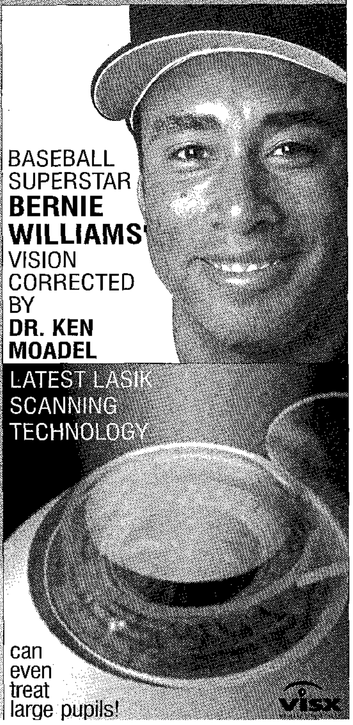
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THEATER JOHN SIMON

Pols in a Pickle

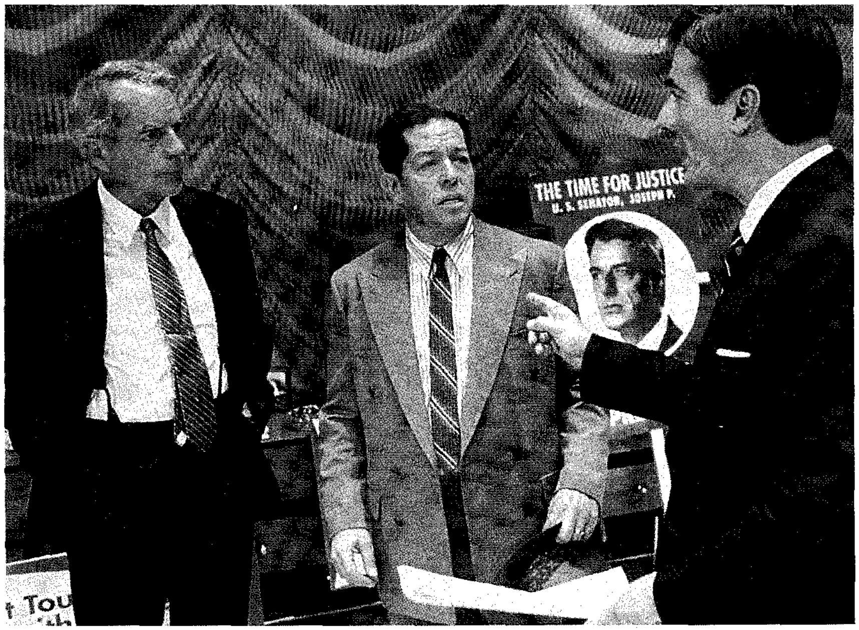
'Gore Vidal's The Best Man' is a well-acted entertainment that lampoons American politics with the not-so-subtle vitriol that is Vidal's specialty.

Because of last year's unrelated but identically titled movie, *The Best Man* had to become **Gore Vidal's The Best Man**, which is just as well considering that Vidal is the best thing about it. It is his best play, and one of his shrewdest pieces of writing, holding up well even in an imperfect production.

The play takes place in two Philadelphia hotel suites during a 1960 political convention in which two candidates for the presidential nomination are running neck and neck. Secretary of State Russell is a Harvard-educated Rhode Island liberal, refined and honorable; supposedly Mafia-busting senator Cantwell (note his name!) is a man of the people, adept at dirty tricks and mouthing phrases like "Let the best man win." Both hope for the endorsement of the wily but likable ex-president, Art Hockstader, who keeps them in suspense. A triangle play in a sense, though with love replaced by politics.

Vidal, who himself ran unsuccessfully for political office, is a senatorial scion and presidential kinsman; he knows the political scene with slightly jaundiced intimacy, and has loosely modeled his three principals on Stevenson, Nixon, and Truman. He has deftly surrounded them with wives, campaign managers, a few ancillary figures, and a swaggering horde of reporters and delegates. The piece is a political whirligig but also a play of ideas, about the politics of life as much as the life of politics, which also includes insights into two very different marriages. Basically a wry comedy, it has serious overtones and philosophical implications.

Dirty tricks: Left to right, Spalding Gray, Jonathan Hadary, and Chris Noth in *Gore Vidal's The Best Man.*



Photograph by Peter Cunningham.

Cantwell has acquired hospital records of a long-past nervous breakdown of Russell's, with which, unless the latter bows out of the race, he threatens to ruin him. Then an old grudge-bearing Army buddy of Cantwell's shows up and offers Russell a homosexual scandal from the senator's service days, usable as a potent counterweapon. Despite urgings to the contrary, Russell shies back from dirty pool, yet may be forced into playing it.

Russell has also been a hefty womanizer (a touch of Kennedy in this Stevenson), so that his wife, Alice, has left him, but she has now come back to support his candidacy. Cantwell and his dizzy wife, Mabel, play lovey-dovey Papa and Mama Bear with each other as if they knew Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*, which, like most other cultural things, they don't. Needless to tell you whose side Vidal is on, but he has written juicy roles for all concerned. And wit is plentiful, edged with sadness: Hockstader is dying by inches.

The writing squeezes all sorts of good things out of this material: surprises, reversals, pungent character sketches, satire, worldly wisdom. It is all (including shady sex in the White House) as timely as four decades ago but, to be sure, not so much because of oracular prescience as because the carnival never really changes, in Philadelphia or Washington as in New Orleans or Rio. But that does not mean that reminders of this sadly comical sameness should not be issued periodically, especially if they are well crafted and witty.

Unfortunately, Ethan McSweeny's direction is not up to snuff. When it is not simply plodding, it seems to have goaded the good Christine Ebersole into caricaturing Mabel Cantwell, and has not curbed the funny but excessive Elizabeth Ashley (as the chairman of the Women's Division) from helicoptering over the top. It has also allowed Jonathan Hadary, as the weaselly Marcus, to become even more precariously mannered than he usually is, which constitutes a woeful wonder.

As Russell, Spalding Gray does little to dispel our notion of him as a monologuist rather than an actor, but he carries himself with dignity even if with undernourished passion. As Cantwell, Chris Noth tends to be rather one-note, but at least the note is well chosen and sees him through. Better than either is the Hockstader of Charles Durning, one of our canniest actors, who scores with the minimum of effort or emphasis.

Good work, too, from Michael Learned as an Alice Russell whose hauteur is not

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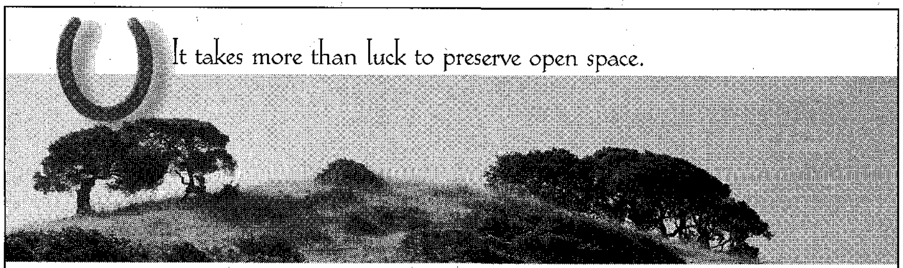

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frigidity, whose repressed longing is not played for pathos. Mark Blum and Jordan Lage, as the rival campaign managers, get every ounce of vitality out of their supporting roles. Add John Arnone's cleverly stylized set, skillfully suggesting two different suites plus a convention hall, even if neither Arnone nor the director quite succeeds in conveying three different rooms within the same suite. Theoni V. Aldredge's costumes exhibit her trusty savoir faire, though one of Mabel's may be too droll to be true. Howell Binkley's lighting, David Van Tieghem's sounds, and Walter Cronkite's voice complete the compelling picture. Whatever reservations you may have about this production, boredom will not be one of them.

A NEAR-ILLITERATE BLACK YOUTH, JEFFERSON, is condemned to death in 1948 small-town Louisiana for a murder he didn't commit. A white lawyer unsuccessfully defended him by portraying him as an ignorant hog, incapable of responsibility. Jefferson now acts the wordless beast who'll have to be dragged to the chair. His godmother, old Emma Glenn, who raised him, wants him to die with dignity befitting a man. She persuades Grant Wiggins, who taught him until he dropped out after fourth grade, to keep visiting him during the few months before execution, and teach him to die like an exemplar rather than an animal.

But Grant is disgusted with his lot as a country schoolteacher in the racist South and, like others before him, intends to decamp to a more viable venue. He wants to take with him his girlfriend, Vivian, who teaches city kids and firmly believes in staying put and helping blacks to acquire status through knowledge. Grant must, in the short time remaining, humanize the recalcitrant Jefferson, if only for death, not life. To this end, he must also compete with the rantings of a fanatical preacher, who would Bible-thump the youth into Heaven.

That, in a nutshell, is the play Romulus Linney has fashioned out of a 1993 novel by Ernest J. Gaines, **A Lesson Before Dying**. A novel dealing with inner conflicts—chiefly the teacher's—is hard to translate into dialogue and stage action. But Linney largely pulls it off, thanks also to Kent Thompson's direction, Marjorie Bradley Kellogg's design, and the flawless acting of Stephen Bradbury, Aaron Harpold, Tracey A. Leigh, John Henry Redwood, and Beatrice Winde. As Grant and Jefferson, Isiah Whitlock Jr. and Jamahl Marsh are irresistible. Melodrama and tearjerker, perhaps, but rousing theater for sure. ▬

John Simon's 1997–2000 reviews are available at **newyorkmag.com**.

ART MICHAEL BRENSON

Seeing Is Believing

Despite the silly title, the Guggenheim makes the case for six masters of the Russian avant-garde—all of whom happen to have been women.

THE TITLE IS TACKY AND MISLEADING. **Amazons of the Avant-Garde: Alexandra Exter, Natalia Goncharova, Liubov Popova, Olga Rozanova, Varvara Stepanova, and Nadezhda Udaltsova** suggests that these six Russian artists were a group; they weren't. It also suggests that they were heroic figures who triumphed against all odds over the gender discrimination prevalent in early-twentieth-century Russia. The catalogue makes clear, however, that these women did not see themselves in conflict with the male artists with whom they worked, exhibited, and lived: "Their relationships with their male colleagues," writes co-curator John E. Bowlt, "seem to have been remarkably harmonious, collaborative, and fruitful." Referring to Goncharova's relationship with the painter Mikhail Larionov, art historian Jane A. Sharp notes: "Memoirs of colleagues and friends underscore the reciprocity of their relationship and the central place it occupied in Moscow's bohemian circles."

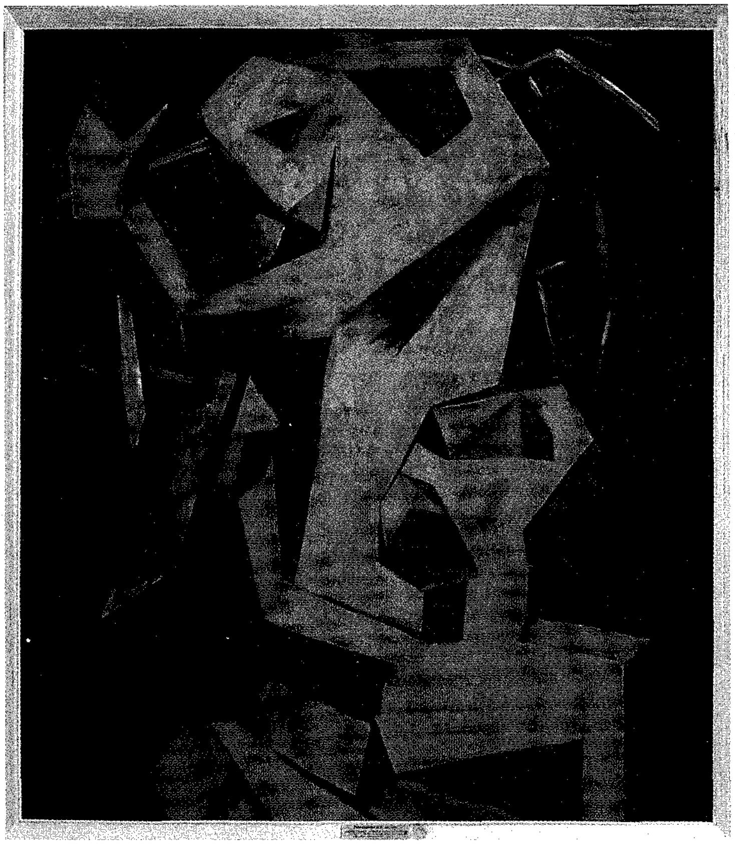
While "Amazons," at the Guggenheim, is somewhat compromised by the tension between the hype of the title and the show's scholarly seriousness, it brings to New York many wonderful paintings, and its main point will stick. The strength of woman artists in Russia between 1905 and 1920 has been recognized for some time, but hearing about it, or getting glimpses of it, is one thing; seeing it is another. With just over 70 artworks, the exhibition is too limited, but it is big enough to leave no doubt that these artists really were that good. The confidence, readiness, and zest in their paintings are astonishing and a reminder of why the Russian avant-garde inspired and haunted artists throughout the twentieth century.

The exhibition begins, appropriately, with Goncharova, the oldest (born in 1881) and most enterprising, polemical, and mercurial of the six. During the tumultuous pre-revolutionary years, Goncharova seems to have changed pictorial styles almost as often as clothes. In 1907, she painted an impishly brash naturalistic self-portrait, and in 1907–08 an expressionistic tribute to the labor and loyalty of the Russian peasant. In 1910, she used a soberly iconic style to paint *Apocalypse (Elder With Seven Stars)*, one of her controversial interpretations of Christian themes.

Goncharova's 1912 *Peasants Gathering Grapes* is an unforgettable and emblematic work marked by Pablo Picasso's early Cubism as well as by Scythian statuary and other Eastern artistic traditions. Its two monumental figures, seemingly male and female but perhaps with genders as yet unformed, are so much bigger than the five-foot-tall canvas in which they are as cramped as basketball players in an attic that they seem irrepressible. Their sun-baked bodies work in tandem in the pre-dawn darkness of an obscure landscape that could be the budding scaffolding of a new city, a different world. The next year, however, Goncharova shifted again, this time composing with fractured planes, her new image of nature no longer marked by the peasant's slow, indomitable rhythms but by urban dynamism and speed. The exhibition abruptly drops her in 1914, when she left for Paris (where she wrote, designed theater sets, and sometimes repainted her Russian works).

This first of the two parts of the exhibition ends with the equally compelling and mischievous Stepanova, thirteen years younger than Goncharova and the youngest artist in the show. The people in her 1920 paintings are of a kind children might draw—with empty moon faces, and legs and arms shaped like sticks or rectangles. They suggest human beings as industrial parts or as musical notes or instruments. They dance and work, play and are played. Stepanova, a poet of exuberance and freedom, believed in the creative potential of disorder and anarchy (the word she liked was *transrational*). Her paintings reaffirm human individuality even as the machinelike anonymity of her figures now seems to augur the assault on the individual by the Russian state.

Goncharova, Rozanova, Exter, and Stepanova made paintings that immediately evoke realities outside of painting: rural tradition, urban dynamism, the energies of nature, or the power of machines. By contrast, Popova,



Bursting the frame: Natalia Goncharova's irrepressible *Peasants Gathering Grapes* (1912).

Photograph courtesy of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

whose work, along with Udaltsova's, is shown on a different floor, made paintings that need to be approached through the language of painting and taken on their own terms. Her great 1921 abstraction *Spatial-Force Construction* demands sustained attention to line, shape, color, and edge. While concentrating on the density and velocity of a diagonal—or on the way a red curve, white crescent, or brown triangle emerges and interacts and claims a section of the surface—the painting reveals itself as a thought process, as a producer of consciousness, and as a signpost to a different space, perhaps a fourth dimension.

WHAT IS STUNNINGLY EVIDENT IN THIS SHOW is the spiritual conviction of artists who have been discussed primarily in social and political terms. It's hard to do justice to their paintings without using a word that makes most art professionals cringe: *love.* These artists were passionate about color and light. Their light has a striking warmth and glow, even a sweetness. Because of its physicality, it has a tactility and availability that the light in Cubism and Futurism, which strongly influenced the Russian avant-garde, rarely if ever has. All of these painters, aware of Russian icons and steeped in one or another strain of Russian mysticism, believed that through light and color they could tap essential sources of transformation—spiritual but also social—and through their paintings, share that transforming power with ordinary people.

Unfortunately, the show offers little evidence—only a handful of photographs—that these six artists also produced work that was connected to everyday life. Bowlt, who organized the exhibition with Matthew Drutt of the Guggenheim and Zelfira Tregulova, an independent Russian curator, acknowledges the oversight when he writes that the show "concentrates on studio paintings at the expense of the applied arts in which the six women also excelled, including designs for books, textiles, fashion, ceramics, and the stage." How much richer the show would have been had it included such pragmatic work to show how the artists might have brought people unfamiliar with art to their paintings; explained how Popova thought about the lines and surfaces of her poster and book designs; or made clear what role the meditative or analytic attention many of their works required played in the greater cultural renewal to which they were committed. While "Amazons of the Avant-Garde" affirms the stature of these artists, and thus their place in art history, it also narrows their cultural impact by detaching them from the realities of their time and the breadth of their ambition. ▬

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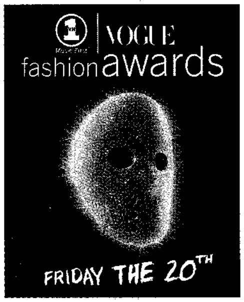

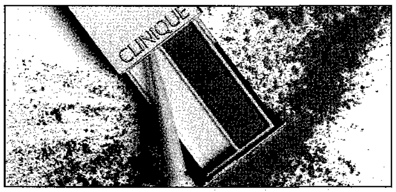

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CLASSICAL MUSIC PETER G. DAVIS

Drama Queen

Prima diva Lauren Flanigan takes on Donizetti's emotionally extravagant Elizabeth I in 'Roberto Devereux,' but bel canto may not be her forte.

AS THE NEW YORK CITY OPERA'S CURRENT DIVA in residence, Lauren Flanigan has fearlessly exercised her options with challenging repertory choices and a caution-be-damned performance style. Now, risking it all, she has taken on Queen Elizabeth in the company's new production of Donizetti's **Roberto Devereux**, a role that makes huge vocal and dramatic demands on any singer. Not only that, but nearly everyone in town still associates the part with Beverly Sills, even those who never saw that local legend in this or any other opera.

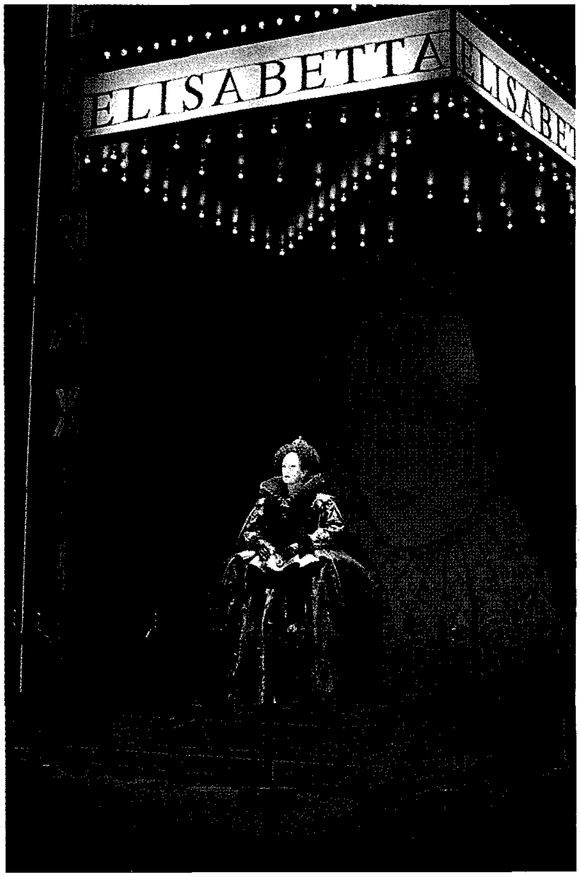
Well, life goes on, and *Roberto Devereux* is too good a vehicle to be retired along with a famous interpreter. Elizabeth is worthy of being ranked with Norma as one of the great bel canto roles, even if the score as a whole never quite reaches the level of Bellini's masterpiece. Of course the libretto plays hob with history, but that hardly matters. The aging queen's dalliance with the Earl of Essex and the latter's execution were real enough, but not much else is: the Duke of Nottingham's evil plotting; the amorous intrigues involving the Duke's wife, Sarah; and the distraught queen's virtual abdication after Devereux's beheading. But what a role for an inspired singing actress! Elizabeth's volatile character is mirrored in vocal lines of extraordinary depth and expressive range, especially in the lurching intervals and spiraling melodies of her final aria as she obsesses over Roberto's headless corpse and her own guilt in the tragedy.

I doubt that Flanigan is the sort to be intimidated by whatever memories audiences might have of her predecessor. This soprano has more pressing realities to grapple with here, and one of them is the suspicion that, for all her versatility, bel canto may not be her strongest suit. A technically resourceful, musicianly singer who shrewdly judges the dramatic effect of every note, Flanigan is at her best during the confrontational scenes of Act Two, when she can use the weight and distinctive color of her soprano to exciting effect. What's missing is a lack of pliancy in the more florid passages, coloratura éclat when that is needed, and the ability to float tones effortlessly on the breath during sustained, soft legato singing—the basic virtues of a classically organized voice, in short, and essential for any interpreter of Italian bel canto opera.

Aside from the vocal hurdles, Flanigan must also contend with Mark Lamos's perverse production, inscrutable on the one hand and maliciously interventionist on the other. Andrew Lieberman's unit set resembles the garish lobby of a shiny cinema multiplex, with GLORIANA spelled out vertically in red lightbulbs on one side. Portraits and cardboard cutout figures of the queen at various stages in her life pop up here and there, and a lit-up marquee advertising ELISABETTA hovers over the roped-off throne area—one half-expects a royal ticket-taker to materialize at any moment.

Perhaps this is meant to symbolize Elizabeth the woman trapped in the theater of her public life; if so, the device went haywire at some point in the planning stages and the results look idiotic. Worse, Lamos further hamstrings Flanigan by requiring her to behave like a mechanical, white-faced mannequin before becoming unhinged during her moment-of-truth finale. I've never seen an important singer so sabotaged by a more misconceived, out-of-control production—no wonder the team responsible for it all lacked the courage to take curtain calls on opening night.

The other three principals merely coped, never indicating that they might have been capable of better things in a more reasonable theatrical context. Fernando De La Mora was utterly faceless as Roberto, Jane Dutton made little vocal capital of Sarah's music, and Mark Delavan mostly bellowed as Nottingham, all of them neither helped nor hindered by George Manahan's band-masterly conducting. The City Opera may, as the ads tell us, be on an *(continued on page 98)*



Marquee value: Among the obstacles facing Flanigan in *Devereux* is Mark Lamos's perverse City Opera staging.

Photograph by Carol Rosegg.

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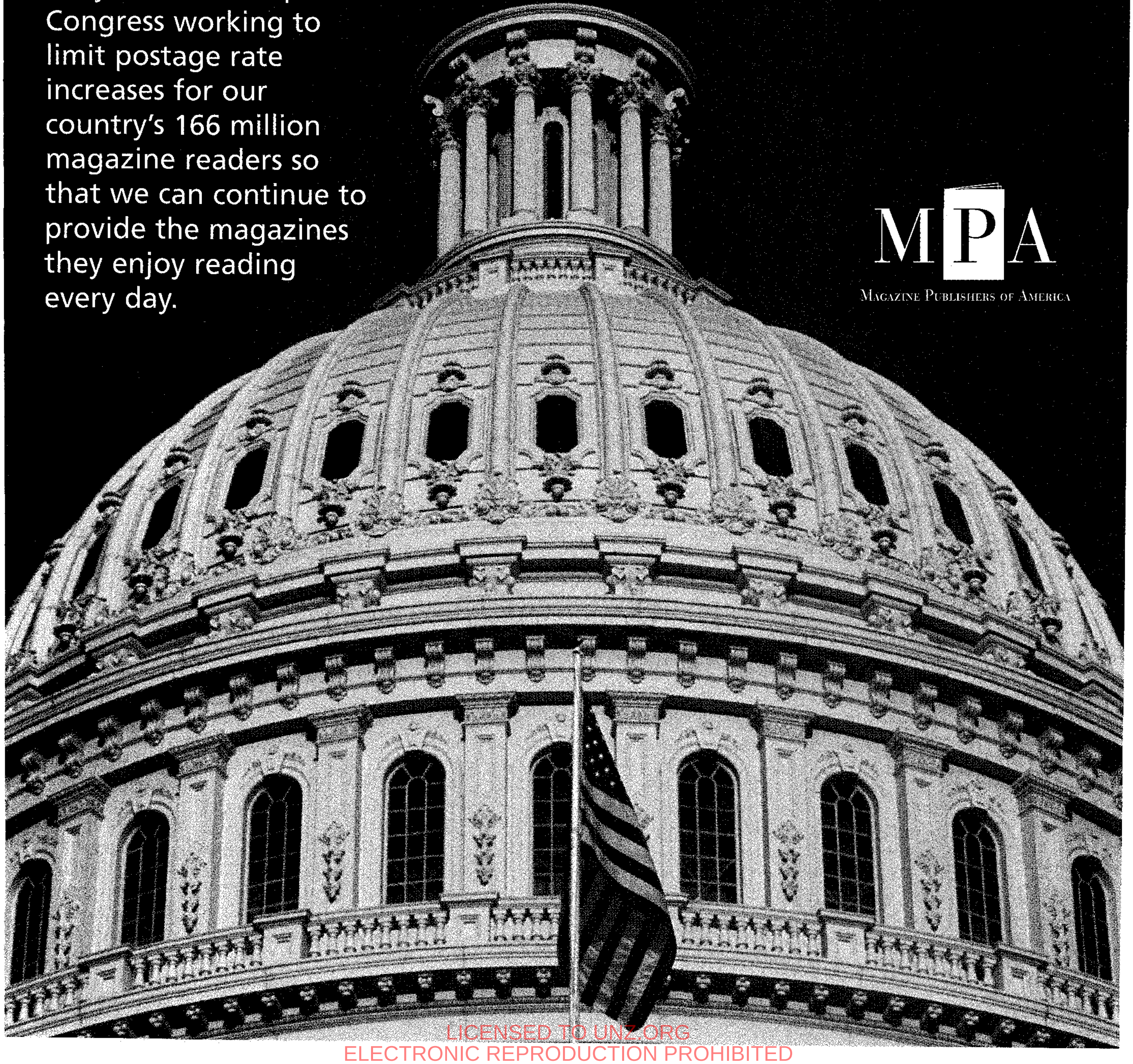


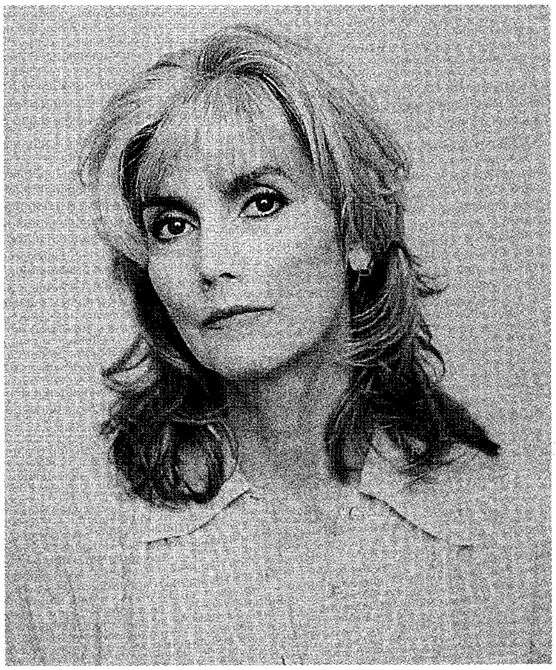
POP MUSIC **ROBERT LEVINE**

Woman With a Past

With 'Red Dirt Girl,' country legend Emmylou Harris sails confidently into smooth waters—without losing (too much of) her southern grit.

EMMYLOU HARRIS WAS A BRAINY BEAUTY QUEEN from the D.C. suburbs trying to make it as a folksinger when she met Gram Parsons, who recruited her as a backup singer, moved her out to Los Angeles, and turned her on to the country harmonies of the Louvin Brothers. Hooked on early country's unadorned tales of sin and redemption, she barely stopped to look forward. After spending the seventies expanding on Parsons's hazy vision of country as "cosmic American music," she threw herself into bluegrass, recorded an album at Nashville's Ryman Auditorium with the all-acoustic Nash Ramblers, and explored "songs of the west" in the mid-nineties. She was never timid—Harris made country move to rock's rhythms with an artist's ear and an angel's voice—but she sometimes honored the past with a literalness only a former folkie could muster.

That all ended with 1995's brilliant *Wrecking Ball.* In need of a new producer, Harris turned to Daniel Lanois, who brought a sonic gauze and an expansive scope to U2's *The Joshua Tree* and has since helped Bob Dylan revive his career on *Time Out of Mind.* Anything but authentic and all the better for it, *Wrecking Ball*'s modern sound captured the haunting, high-lonesome vibe of Harris's best performances with quiet echoes and understated effects. And after a detour into the harmony singing she's loved since hearing the Louvins (1999's *Western Wall*), Harris again looks ahead on **Red Dirt Girl** (Nonesuch).



On her own, again: Harris wrote most of the songs for *Red Dirt Girl.*

Though the album follows the path cleared by *Wrecking Ball,* Harris takes more confident strides; she wrote nearly everything on *Red Dirt Girl* herself (the first time she's done so since 1985's vaguely conceptual *The Ballad of Sally Rose*). Lanois didn't produce, but Malcolm Burn (who engineered and mixed *Wrecking Ball*) gives *Red Dirt Girl* a similarly spacious sound: "The Pearl" sets Harris's meditation on faith over a chiming track, and the poppier "I Don't Want to Talk About It Now" gets a rhythmic charge from a funky bass line. Even enhanced by effects, her songwriting resonates with the stark emotions—faith, hope, crushing guilt and remorse—of the country she cut her teeth on.

Unfortunately, a little knowledge of the recording studio can be a dangerous thing, and *Red Dirt Girl* occasionally crosses the line from mellow into mannered. While Lanois made *Wrecking Ball* so intimate you could hear Harris breathe on the title track, Burn sometimes smooths over such impurities with sonic twists and tweaks—a springy sound at the start of "The Pearl," what sounds like a tape unwinding at the beginning of "Michelangelo"—that only serve as distractions.

Hardly terminal ones, though. Monday night, during a "rehearsal with an audience" at Joe's Pub, Harris found a happy medium between formalist experimentation (a country band with a drum solo!) and her traditional expressiveness. Old songs got new textures, new songs found traditional roots, and "Bang the Drum Slowly," a song Harris wrote for her late father that bogs down in orchestration on *Red Dirt Girl,* became a moving lamentation with a modern edge. As on the best parts of *Red Dirt Girl,* she displayed the confidence in where you're going that only comes from knowing exactly where you're from.

In brief: INSTEAD OF COMING TO country from the counterculture, Willie Nelson stomped away from seventies Nashville to cut his Texas twang with rock rebellion (and copious amounts of dope). Like Harris, he helped kick-start country rock in the seventies, then foundered a bit in the nineties before reinvigorating his career with help from Lanois (on 1998's *Teatro,* which features guest vocals from Harris). Especially in comparison, **Milk Cow Blues** (Island) sounds like a placeholder. The song selection is impressively varied ("Sittin' on Top of the World," in particular, rewards Nelson's brooding restraint), and the guest list is appropriately star-studded (Dr. John, B. B. King, Kenny Wayne Shepherd)—de rigueur in the wake of Santana's recent success. But Nelson's voice, silky enough to sing standards, lacks the vocal grit for the blues, and he rarely works up enough energy to milk the titular cow. Most of these songs are better suited for a supper club than for a juke joint. ▬

Photograph by Brigitte Lacombe.

ADAM PLATT

Theater in the Ground

Brasserie 8½ is restaurant dining at its most Fellini-esque: a subterranean stage where the scene, not the food, is the main attraction.

BACK IN THE DIM, DISTANT EIGHTIES, WHEN THE Great Brasserie Plague first swept over Manhattan, I contrived a personal method for separating decent bistro cuisine from the tired, the trendy, and the merely bad. Forget the overhyped platters of moules, I told myself, the precious napkins of frites speckled with sea salt, those smug profiterole desserts with their Odeon-era sharing spoons for three. Concentrate instead on that bellwether of a great brasserie menu: the salad frisée. As any stealthy fat man knows, a nice frisée is as sinful as a good steak, but less weighty. It comes in different variations (bombed with quail eggs, coated in stylish chèvres), but the essential elements are hard to fake. You need frisée (or chicory) leaves that are crisp but not too bitter. You need a drizzling of warm bacon and some good Roquefort cheese. You also need delicately fried croutons and sweet cloves of garlic, and if all these ingredients are not perfectly aligned, the salad will fail, and the brasserie will, too.

But then, **Brasserie 8½** is not really a brasserie at all. It's the city's latest adventure in showpiece dining, a glittery planetarium of a space in the basement of Gordon Bunshaft's curving office tower, off the corner of 57th and Fifth. The owner, Sheldon Solow (he owns the building too), appears to have the highest stylistic aspirations. He's stocked the establishment with his own Matisse prints and a multimillion-dollar glass mural by Fernand Léger, depicting socialistic workers waving their arms in the air. He's hired the architect Hugh Hardy to approximate a kind of neo-Saarinen airport-lounge vibe, complete with a herd of dimpled waiting chairs and two split-level bars colored in tones of mackerel and tangerine. "Frisée aux Lardons, Quail Eggs" is the menu's queenly description of my favorite dish, but to get to it, you have to jump through all sorts of hoops.

Begin with the restaurant's entryway, a twirling staircase of exactly 25 steps. At Restaurant Associates' other new property, Brasserie, in the Seagram Building, a luminous green walkway deposits diners into the main room. At the entrance to Brasserie 8½, a greeter waits at a polished wood console, behind a wall of curving glass. Below the staircase, down in the restaurant gloom, more greeters lurk, dressed merrily in black ninja-style outfits. "It's your runway moment," whispered one fashion-attuned friend as she watched my self-consciously mincing descent. I was followed down the steps by a group of dazed Japanese ladies, then Regis Philbin and his wife, grinning pained leprechaun grins. In the early evening, tourists along 57th Street sometimes press their noses to the glass wall, which, depending on your mood, makes you feel either vaguely regal or like a performing creature in some strange Sea World lagoon.

The French intended brasserie cuisine to be elegant and simple, eaten in casual surroundings at all hours of the day. But in this kind of high-style, hothouse atmosphere, palates can get addled and confused, and good food disappears in the shuffle. To compensate, chef Julian Alonzo has crowded his menu with big, steroid versions of brasserie originals. The frogs' legs (served tempura-style at the bar) were farm-raised in Florida, according to my bartender, and looked like they'd been transplanted from reasonably sized chickens. My onion soup gratinée was thick as lava and arrived in a bowl the size of a small spittoon. "You don't eat our onion soup; you conquer it," the waiter said. Ditto the côte de boeuf, a 32-ounce brontosaurus joint ($34, plus the de rigueur marrow bone) smothered in a soupy Pinot Noir glaze. "It's as big as your head," whispered my wife, watching as the dish was hoisted onto our table.

Some of these jumbo items succeed better than others. My côte de boeuf was so marbled with fat, I had to roll it aside after a bite or two. Of the five steak courses (including sirloin with frites, hanger, and grilled filet mignon), the best was a brick cut of Black Angus, although I couldn't finish that either. The requisite towers of fruits de mer ($27, plus an additional $15 for the Maine lobster) seemed lavish enough, but if you want just a taste of grandeur, try the jumbo Gulf shrimp (no bargain at $3 apiece), which come regally planted in a salver of crushed ice, with a dipping bowl of creamy wasabi mayonnaise. Overeager

(continued on page 98)

Over-the-top spin: the space-age bar and rotating staircase; above the massive filet mignon.

Photographs by Kenneth Chen.

TELEVISION JOHN LEONARD

Read All About It

Not for 'Deadline' the Talmudic broadsheet parsings of 'Lou Grant'— in Dick Wolf's new series, fame is boldfaced and all news is personal.

SO FAR, WHILE READING A NEWSPAPER, I HAVE never been kicked offline because of a systems error or a power failure or the low-intensity guerrilla warfare between Microsoft and Netscape. So don't tell me the future of journalism is written in pixels and code. I will continue to cherish the messy mosaic of the morning broadsheet and the surreal smear of the tabloid long after the last dot-commie has posted his last stock option in the ghostly cybervoid. Ink is my kind of incense. And so, naturally, I am rooting for **Deadline** (Mondays, starting October 2; 9 to 10 P.M.; NBC), the new Dick Wolf newspaper show that's almost as nostalgic and crabby on the subject as I am.

Ink-stained kvetches: Oliver Platt, left, and Earl Hindman in *Deadline*.

A terrific cast seems to have been ulcerating together in their cubbyholes, at their VDTs, for years before we meet them in the pilot. Oliver Platt is our flawed hero, a hard-drinking, baby-faced, overwrought, and overweight Pulitzer-winning columnist for the New York *Ledger*, which looks exactly like the New York *Post*. On the office food chain, he ostensibly reports to tough-glam Bebe Neuwirth, who in her turn answers to right-wing expat Tom Conti, a one-man bonfire of Tom Wolfe's vanities. I'm not quite sure yet what it is that Lili Taylor does at the *Ledger*, but she does it with the same mad gleam of eye, the same shortwave radio signals in her busy head, that she has brought to so many indie films. Also unclear is just which rung on the totem pole Hope Davis occupies, although she's the estranged wife of columnist Platt, and she is, as usual, the designated neurasthenic thoroughbred, the blonde-maned coltish Wasp. (Or, as she will wonderfully describe herself, "a former Foxcroft slut.") To this mix, for the desirable youth demographic, add half a dozen hard-bodied journalism students, whom adjunct professor Platt bullies into doing his legwork, and whom I'll sort out some other time.

We are in no danger of confusing the *Ledger* with Lou Grant's Los Angeles *Tribune*. At the *Tribune*, which bit the dust in 1982, Ed Asner, Nancy Marchand, Mason Adams, Robert Walden, Linda Kelsey, and Jack Bannon spent more time worrying about the ethics of their job than do most journalism schools. At the *Ledger*, everything's personal: self-regard, blood feud, tribal grudge, guts and glory. In *Deadline*'s first hour, Platt insists on reinvestigating one of his old stories—the brutal killing of the employees at a fast-food franchise ("The Cheeseburger Murders"), for which two young black men are about to be executed—not because he has anything against capital punishment but because this "drama queen" hates to be wrong. In the second hour, Conti will unleash his mad dogs to harass a well-connected businessman, not out of any populist fervor to afflict the comfortable but because this businessman once blackballed him from a private club; and Neuwirth falls into bed with someone she's planning a story on.

The second hour, on October 9, is better than the first—always a good sign. The problem with the first, despite lots of snappy dialogue and ACLU jokes, is that we already know from the opening credits that these young men on death row are innocent of this particular crime, and the story moves, too much by the numbers, to a last-minute confession as convenient as the hoariest courtroom outburst in *Perry Mason*. Whereas the second hour, involving everything from a dead city councilman, a union activist, and a fugitive warrant that goes all the way back to the good old days of antiwar protests and a Police Department "Red Squad," to Pete Seeger, Mark Rudd, exotic dancers, and Cuban cigars, is full of surprises, equally unpredictable in narrative and character—although executive producer Wolf obviously has a thing about undercover spooks and provocateurs in the sixties peace movement, to which he also devoted an episode of *Law & Order*.

But it's *Law & Order* and its *Special Victims Unit* epigone that *Deadline* most resembles, more than *Lou Grant*. If you're going to make dramatic network television out of stories ripped from yesterday's headlines, why not have a daily paper of your very own? It certainly speeds things up. Whether it will float, Nielsen knows. Newspaper shows shut down almost as often as

Photograph by Robert Gilberg, courtesy of Studios USA Television, LLC.

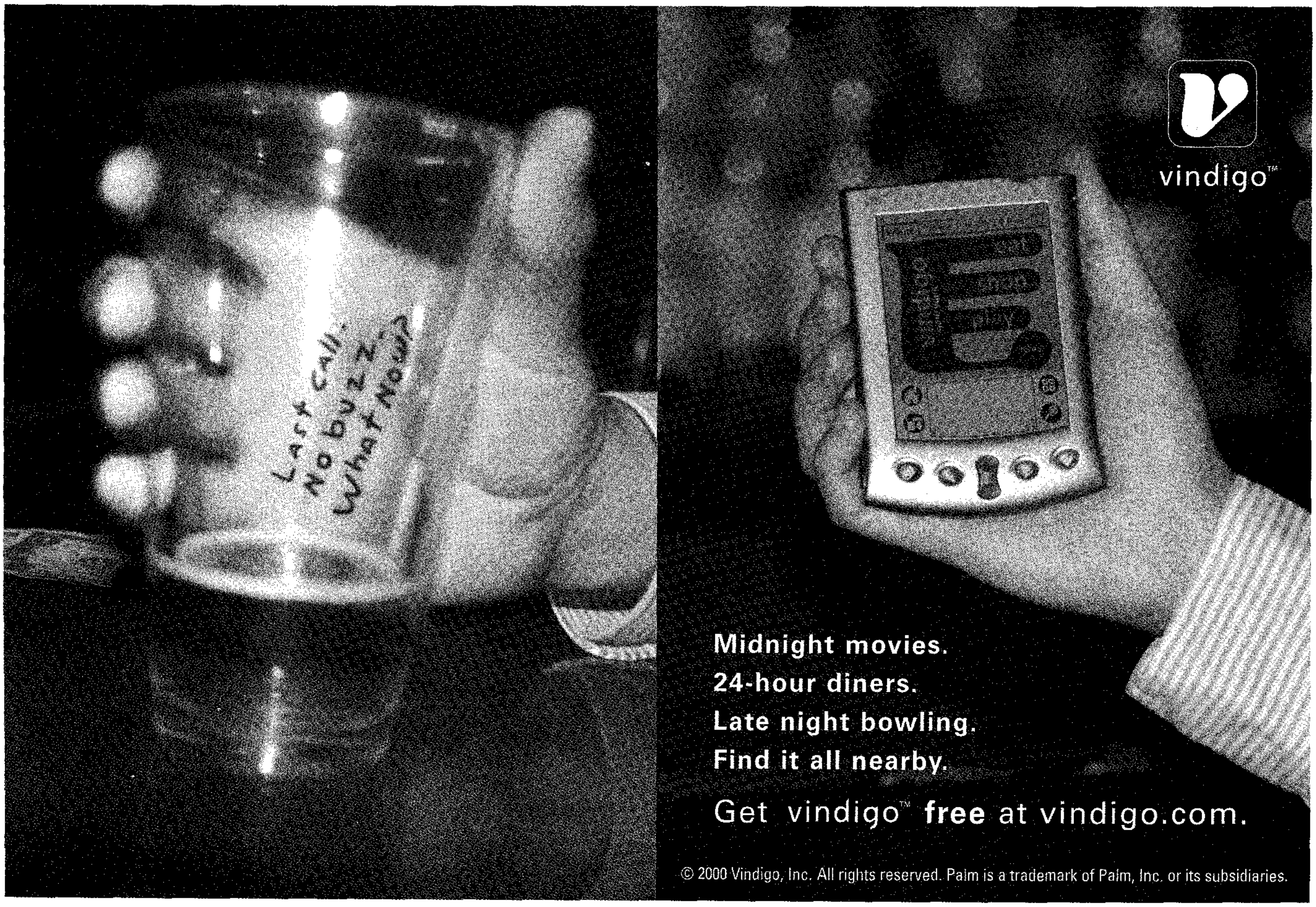
newspapers. Whatever happened to *Hard Copy,* with Michael Murphy and Wendy Crewson? Or *Capital News,* with Helen Slater and William Russ? Or *New York News,* with Mary Tyler Moore? Even, for that matter, to *Slap Maxwell,* with Dabney Coleman? Excepting *Lou Grant,* which was probably canceled on account of politics, there hasn't been a successful journalism series since *The Name of the Game,* after which Susan Saint James actually married a TV producer.

Here's hoping. The fact that Wolf's *Ledger* is a tabloid—so lowlife-feisty, suspecting the worst and publishing first, like the old-school private eye who got up from his bottle to do battle against the big guys on behalf of the losers—may ingratiate its reporters and editors to a sullen audience that, if public-opinion polls are to be trusted, doesn't believe a word it reads, anyway. At least they aren't sitting around in their social pretensions, imagining themselves to be a fourth branch of the government, or even a separate country, with their own pomp, protocols, dress codes, foreign policy, and official secrets, lacking only an anthem and a beanie.

THERE IS ALSO A HEALTHY DOSE OF CLASS animus in **That's Life** (previewing Sunday, October 1, 8 to 9 P.M.; Saturdays thereafter, 8 to 9 P.M.; CBS). The exceedingly appealing Heather Paige Kent—think Sandra Bullock—stars as Lydia DeLucca, a 32-year-old New Jersey bartender who decides to upwardly mobilize herself by ditching her blue-collar dead-end boyfriend to go back to college at Montclair State, where she ends up in a course on human behavior having to listen to a dyspeptic professor grumble on about postmodernism and the "de-centered self." Waiting at home for smart-mouth Lydia are her loving but mystified working-class parents, Ellen Burstyn as the homemaker mom and Paul Sorvino as the turnpike-toll-collector dad: "You want to find yourself? Go to Mass." Waiting at the hair salon are best friends Debi Mazar, the best gum-chewer in the styling business, and Kristin Bauer, a former Miss Jersey who seems to be looking for Philip Roth to find her for *American Pastoral.* And waiting at the bar is the professor himself (Peter Firth), who turns out to be an alcoholic. Lydia talks to us in voice-over—not a good sign. And has black-and-white *Ally McBeal*–like fantasies, also nervous-making. But how she thinks her way through and then goes about writing her first college paper, while everybody else in the family is watching the Giants play football on television under the twin Jersey icons of the pope and Frank Sinatra, is ennobling and enthralling. And should be. The paper is about free will and determinism, and so is she.

In brief: NOT FOR THE SQUEAMISH, **Live Free or Die** (Tuesday, September 26, 10 to 11 P.M.; Channel 13) is an especially scary installment of the "P.O.V." independent documentary series. Filmmakers Marion Lipschutz and Rose Rosenblatt spent months following the story of Dr. Wayne Goldner, a Bedford, New Hampshire, obstetrician and gynecologist whose willingness to perform abortions has made him the target of Right to Life pickets, hate mail, and threats of physical violence to his family. The angry picketers also got him dismissed from his job at a local middle school, where he was teaching a course in abstinence-based sex education. It's not that the community itself is anti-choice. But the parents are afraid that their children will be harmed in confrontations outside, and everybody else just wants the problem to move to some other town, never mind medical emergencies, the Supreme Court, common sense, and common decency. ▬

John Leonard's 1997–2000 reviews are available at **newyorkmag.com**.



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Davis *continued from page 92*

artistic roll, but its successes to date have been mostly imports, preexisting productions of proven excellence—no chances taken there. It's a shame that the company continues to have such bad luck with its own in-house projects, and *Roberto Devereux* is only the latest disappointment.

THE FAITHFUL SENT UP SHOUTS OF DELIGHT when they heard that **Beverly Sills**'s recordings of Donizetti's Tudor trilogy would soon be reissued on seven CDs from Decca. The on-and-off-again availability of Sills's recorded legacy is as mysterious as its quality is spotty. Despite her sudden fame at home in the late sixties, no major international record company was willing to record her at the time, and most of her early opera sets came out on ABC, a pop label. Family money, it was said, made the recordings possible (a claim vigorously denied by the family), and if so, a private fortune must have been spent: The orchestras, conductors, and supporting casts are all top-rank, and the original issues, apart from cheap vinyl pressings, could not have been more elegantly presented.

For some, including the diva herself, Sills's roles in *Roberto Devereux*, *Maria Stuarda*, and *Anna Bolena* represented the crowning achievements of her career. I respectfully disagree. For me, her best years came a decade earlier, when she excelled as Baby Doe, Cleopatra, the Queen of Shemakha, Lucia, and Manon, lyric-coloratura parts all sung before a media creature named Supersills arrived on the scene and began to lose her voice along with the spirit that made it glow. Even Sills admits that the effort it cost her to sing the three Donizetti queens probably shortened her vocal life, and one can chart the damage on these performances recorded between 1969 and 1972.

Roberto Devereux is the earliest and represents her best work on the set. The opening aria is bewitching for its delicate tracery, breath control, and easy virtuosity—Sills studied with a pupil of Mathilde Marchesi, and much of that legendary teacher's classic bel canto training was obviously passed on to Sills. Later, though, as Sills tries to fill out the big phrases and put more weight on her voice than it will bear, the tone turns strident, and the dramatic utterances begin to sound like the tantrums of a petulant soubrette. What a pity that there is so little recorded evidence of this remarkable voice when it was in its prime, functioning in peak condition, and addressing the music it sang best. ■

Peter G. Davis's 1997–2000 reviews are available at **newyorkmag.com**.

Platt *continued from page 95*

desserts like the caramelized banana split and a chocolate crème brûlée smothered in rose oil worked better as pieces of foodie art than as things to eat. After my bruiser main courses, I preferred the soothing lychee soup, with a disc of blackberry sorbet in the middle, or the nice fig tart, stippled with bits of honeycomb on top.

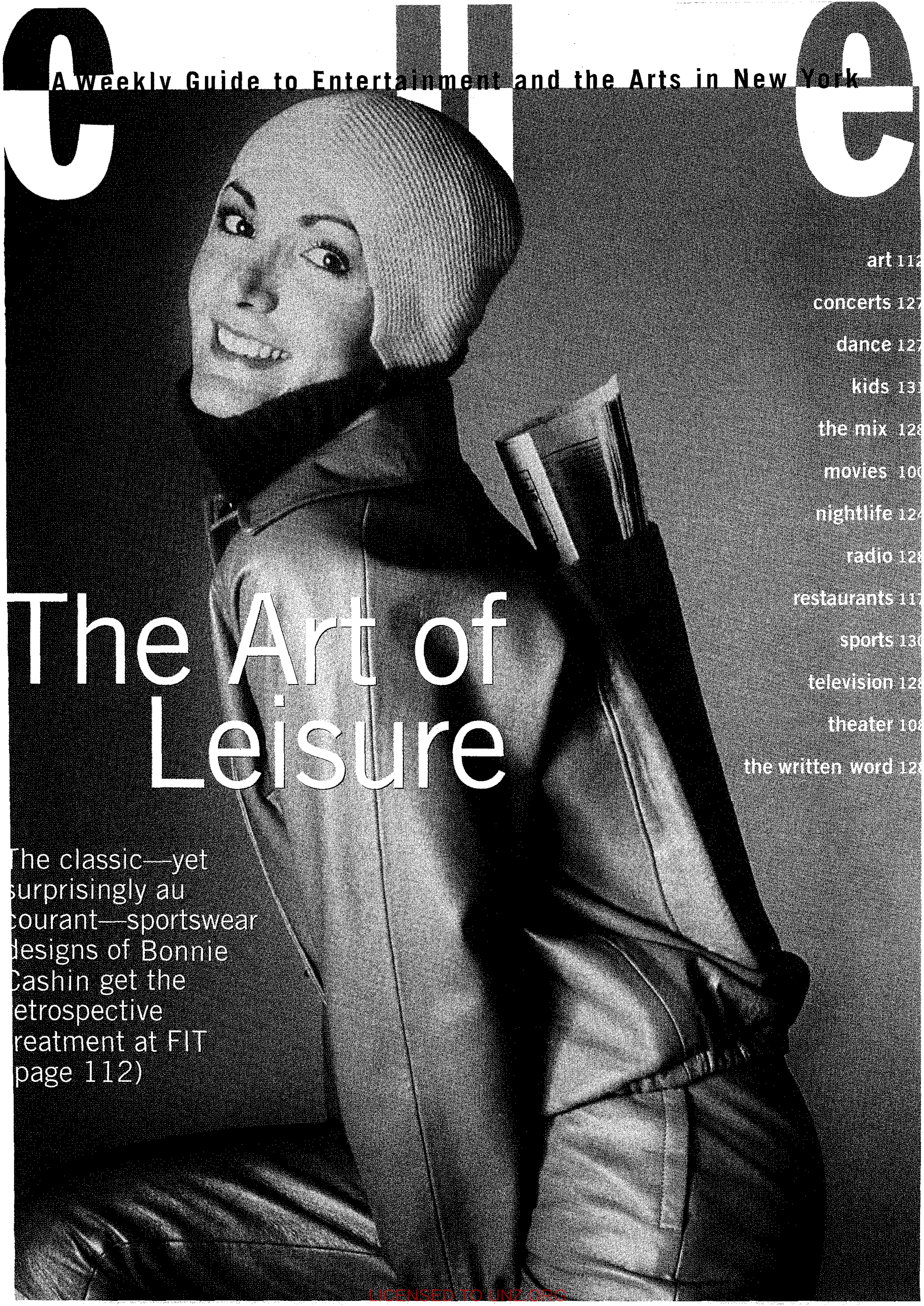
There are a few other surprises buried deep in Chef Alonzo's overstuffed menu. The Thursday plat du jour is suckling pig cooked to crackly perfection, with a smoky hint of apples. The fromage burger is worth ordering for the meat alone, despite soggy onion rings and a muffling brioche bun, and the chef's jumbo crab cakes (lunch only) are enhanced by a sweet dusting of crushed cornflakes. High rollers can wash these delicacies down with bottles of Opus One ($145 for the '96 vintage) from a list of more than 150 wines. There are legions of sherries and armagnacs, and ten fancy cognacs, including a glass of Fussigny Très Vieille for $35. Elbowing for space among rows of frat boys at the tangerine-colored bar, I counted twenty vintages of single-malt scotch and sampled odd designer cocktails with names like Velvet Hammer (Tia Maria, Cointreau, cream) and Ginger Cosmo (ginger-infused Vox vodka, Cointreau, cranberry juice, lime).

And what about the regal frisée? It appeared one evening after my woozy encounter with a White Chocolate Martini, a wicked drink made with Chopin vodka and icy-clear crème de cacao. In the soft spaceship glow of our banquette, the salad looked ghostly pale and as big as a hair net. It was plated upright, on a giant white platter, and its interior was speckled with peppery lardons and smudges of warm Roquefort. The quail eggs were raw, not cooked, then broken into small toast rounds of brioche, and when you mixed them into the light vinaigrette, they had a gentle binding effect. "This is really working out well for me," said another delicate fashionista friend as she prodded the giant leaves with a fork, "but do we really need *three* quail eggs?" The answer to this cosmic question is no, probably not. But the dish tasted good, even in my addled state, and in a joint with a twirling staircase, two *Star Wars* cocktail bars, and a lounge space shaped like some strange Stanley Kubrick fantasia, who's really counting?

Brasserie 8½, 9 West 57th Street (212-829-0812). Lunch, Monday through Friday 11:30 A.M. *to 3* P.M. *Dinner, Monday through Saturday 5:30* P.M. *to midnight, Sunday till 10* P.M. *Appetizers, $8 to $16; entrées, $18 to $34. All major credit cards.* ■

Adam Platt's reviews are available at **newyorkmag.com**.

A Weekly Guide to Entertainment and the Arts in New York



The Art of Leisure

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page 112)

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movies

Best in Show...Barenaked in America...The Broken Hearts Club

New Films

An Affair of Love—Frédéric Fonteyne's film—originally titled *Une Liaison Pornographique*—involves two strangers (Nathalie Baye and Sergi Lopez) who meet through a personal ad in order to explore their mutual fetish. Instead of watching their kinky pecadilloes, we're privy to several long monologues about how lonely love can be for urban dwellers. (1 hr. 20 mins.; R) *Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.*

Aimée & Jaguar—The true story of Lilly Wust and Felice Schragenheim (Juliane Kohler and Marie Schrader, respectively), who were lovers in Nazi Germany despite the fact that one was a member of the Jewish underground and the other an exemplar of Nazi motherhood. Based on Erica Fischer's best-selling book of the same name. (2 hrs. 5 mins.; NR) *Quad Cinema; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas; BAM Rose Cinemas.*

★Almost Famous—Cameron Crowe's sweetly engaging coming-of-age movie is set mostly in 1973, and it's about a 15-year-old rock journalist, played by Patrick Fugit, who hooks up with a touring, Led Zeppelin–ish band in order to write a cover story about them for *Rolling Stone.* The band's lead guitarist is played by Billy Crudup, who should finally become a star, and his chief groupie is played by Kate Hudson, whose character's baby fat is already starting to harden. Philip Seymour Hoffman, who may be the best character actor in America, is the rock critic Lester Bangs—the Yoda of the piece. (Rainer; 9/18/00) (1 hr. 45 mins.; R) *Loews Village; Loews 19th St. East; Loews Kips Bay Theatre; Loews 42nd Street E Walk; Clearview's Beekman; Loews Orpheum 7; Clearview's Olympia; Sony Lincoln Square; Pavilion; UA Movies at Sheepshead Bay; Kaufman Astoria Cinema; Atrium; UA Hylan Plaza; UA Movies at Staten Island.*

The Art of War—Wesley Snipes plays a superspy who must save the world from a conspiracy that just might conquer the United Nations. (1 hr. 57 mins.; R) *UA Union Square; Clearview's Chelsea West; Loews 42nd Street E Walk; Loews Orpheum 7; Bay Plaza; Concourse Plaza; Whitestone; Linden Boulevard Multiplex; UA Movies at Sheepshead Bay; UA Astoria.*

Autumn in New York—Winona Ryder plays a dying young woman who is romanced by silver fox Richard Gere in this drippy, luxe love story directed by Joan Chen. It's pretty terrible all around. (Rainer; 8/28/00) (1 hr. 55 mins.; PG-13) *Kew Gardens Cinemas.*

Backstage—A slick, perhaps too slick, look at Jay-Z's 1999 "Hard Knock Life" tour. Co-stars DMX, Redman, and Method Man. (1 hr. 30 mins.; R) *Bay Plaza; Linden Boulevard Multiplex; Canarsie.*

Bait—Jamie Foxx makes his inevitable return to comedy, starring as an ex-convict who's lured by the FBI into catching a psychotic villain. Directed by Antoine Fuqua. (2 hrs.; R) *Loews Village; Loews 19th St. East; Loews Kips Bay Theatre; Loews 42nd Street E Walk; Loews New York Twin; Loews Orpheum 7; Clearview's Metro Cinema; New Coliseum; Nova; Bay Plaza; Concourse Plaza; Whitestone; Clearview's Cobble Hill; Kent Triplex; Linden Boulevard Multiplex; Pavilion; Ridgewood; UA Movies at Sheepshead Bay; Canarsie; Centre Sunnyside; Jackson Triplex; Kaufman Astoria Cinema; Main Street Cinemas; Plaza; UA Crossbay; UA Movieworld; Atrium; UA Hylan Plaza; UA Movies at Staten Island.*

Best in Show—See Rainer, page 84. (1 hr. 20 mins.; PG). *Opens 9/27.*

Bittersweet Motel—A documentary following the foggy, blissed-out antics of the *Über*-hippie musical outfit Phish. (1 hr. 20 mins.; NR) *Cinema Village.*

Bless the Child—Maggie O'Connor (Kim Basinger) just doesn't have time on her hands to consider the supernatural—that is, until she takes under her wing an autistic newborn (Holliston Coleman) whose soul is caught up in a metaphysical battle between the forces of good and evil. Jimmy Smits plays the FBI agent with an encyclopedic knowledge of all things occult. (1 hr. 50 mins.; R) *Whitestone; Linden Boulevard Multiplex.*

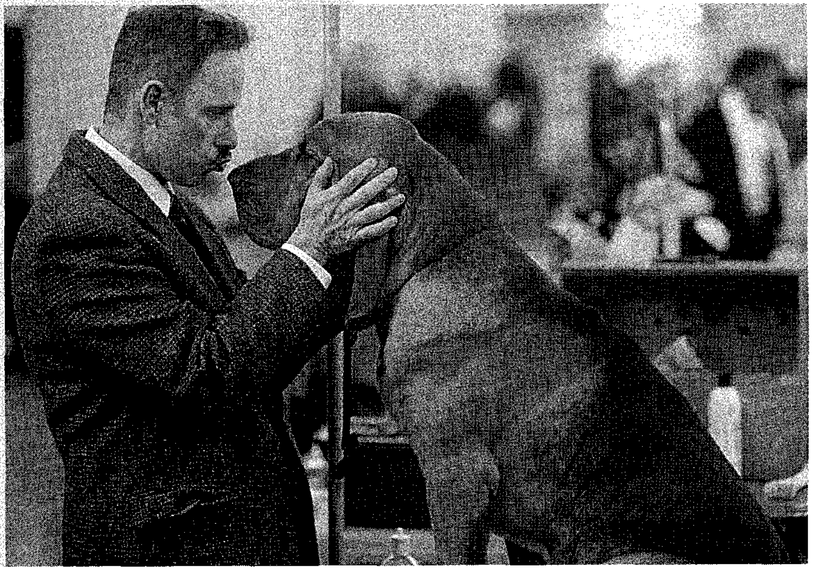
Bring It On—A band of shrill, pom-pom-shaking cheerleaders don't quite know how to react to their new team member: a street-smart punk (Eliza Dusku) imported from Los Angeles. (1 hr. 31 mins; PG-13) *UA Union Square; Loews Kips Bay Theatre; Clearview's 59th Street East; New Coliseum; Sony Lincoln Square; Bay Plaza; Concourse Plaza; Whitestone; Kent Triplex; Linden Boulevard Multiplex;*

Opening

Pet Project

Viewers who thought *The Blair Witch Project* was akin to an especially shrill episode of *The Real World* ought not to turn their backs on improvisational films. Otherwise, they'll miss Christopher Guest's latest comedy, *Best in Show*, a mockumentary that does for dog shows what his other two projects (*This Is Spinal Tap* and *Waiting for Guffman*) did for rock stars and theater people. Inspired by an assortment of eccentrics Guest (pictured) met at his local park, the monomaniacal characters include a pair of high-strung lawyers (Parker Posey and Michael Hitchcock), an amped-up menswear salesman and his wife (Eugene Levy and Catherine O'Hara), and an *Über*-flamboyant hair-salon owner and his would-be kept boy (Michael McKean and John Michael Higgins), all of whom pray that their pooches will win Best in Show. "We shot over 58 hours of footage," says Guest, "and as far as the actual way we worked, I guess I could only compare it to playing jazz. Eugene [Levy] and I wrote an outline, breaking down each scene, and then we met up with the actors to discuss their characters. Everyone knew what key they were supposed to play in: They knew the plot points, but there was absolutely no dialogue written down. We basically just turned on the cameras and created each scene as they came along." Were there any unscripted mishaps with the dogs during the picture? "Not a one. We only used champion show dogs—there wasn't so much as an impromptu bark," says Guest without so much as a trace of irony. As for what's coming next, all he'll say is "A vacation. This film was six years in the making, and it's sure to take me a few months to think of another one." *Best in Show* opens September 27.

Derek de Koff



'Cue' cover photograph courtesy of the Museum at F.I.T.

“Funny. Touching. A Cool Chick Flick.”

ROSIE O’DONNELL

MISS ILLINOIS

Minnie
Driver

Hallie Kate
Eisenberg

Joey Lauren
Adams

Kathleen
Turner

a Sally Field film

Beautiful

Destination Films presents in association with Flashpoint Limited and Prosperity Pictures a 2 Drivers/Fogwood Films production a Sally Field film Minnie Driver "Beautiful" Joey Lauren Adams Leslie Stefanson Bridgette L. Wilson with Kathleen Turner and Hallie Kate Eisenberg casting by Amanda Mackey Johnson and Cathy Sandrich co-producers Mark Morgan Jon Bernstein Jade Ramsey costume designer Chrisi Karvonides-Dushenko music by John Frizzell edited by Debra Neil-Fisher, ACE production designer Charles Breen director of photography Robert Yeoman executive producers Dick Vane Kate Driver Wendy Japhet Barry London Brent Baum Steve Stabler Marty Fink David Forrest Beau Rogers

Prosperity Pictures **PG-13** PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 13 producers John Bertolli and B.J. Rack written by Jon Bernstein directed by Sally Field DESTINATION FILMS

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STARTS FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

Pavilion; Ridgewood; UA Marboro; UA Movies at Sheepshead Bay; Kaufman Astoria Cinema; Main Street Cinemas; UA Crossbay II; UA Movies at Bayside; Atrium; UA Movies at Staten Island; YWCA Cine-Club.

Butterfly—This film—a huge hit at the Sundance Film Festival as well as the recipient of thirteen Goya (Spanish Oscar) nominations—stars Spanish megastar Fernando Fernán-Gómez as a kindly schoolmaster who helps a timid new student adapt both to his campus and to the world around him. (1 hr. 36 mins.; R) *CC Eastside Playhouse; Kew Gardens Cinemas.*

Cecil B. Demented—John Waters's new movie stars Melanie Griffith as a movie queen with a diva-size ego who is kidnapped by a guerilla film director, Stephen Dorff's Cecil B. Demented, and terrorized into starring in his movie. His crew, the Sprocket Holes, are a gaggle of weirdos; their Yippie-style chants call for the destruction of bad cinema. Waters tosses out some funny ideas here, and Griffith, as a combination Gorgon and den mother, is incongruously funny. But this satiric attack on Hollywood garbage isn't much of a feat, filmmaking-wise, which sours the satire. Waters, in his public appearances, remains his own best creation; his movies are almost superfluous by comparison. (Rainer; 8/21/00) (1 hr. 28. mins; R) *CC Village East.*

The Cell—A child therapist (Jennifer Lopez) who's involved with a revolutionary research program is politely invited into the mind of a comatose serial killer (Vincent D'Onofrio) in the hopes of rescuing his latest victim. (1 hr. 50 mins.; R) *CC Village East; Clearview's Chelsea West; Loews Kips Bay Theatre; CC Cinemas 1, 2, 3; Loews 42nd Street E Walk; Loews Orpheum 7; Loews 84th Street; Sony Lincoln Square; Bay Plaza; Concourse Plaza; Whitestone; Linden Boulevard Multiplex; UA Movies at Sheepshead Bay; Cinemart; Kaufman Astoria Cinema; UA Crossbay II; UA Movies at Staten Island.*

★**Chicken Run**—The Bristol, England–based Aardman Studios have fashioned their first feature-length claymation movie, and it's a pip: a prison-break movie starring chickens, a kind of egglayer *Stalag 17.* The concept itself is funny, but co-directors Nick Park and Peter Lord bring in a lot more, including an assortment of hens who together make up a panorama of British spinsterhood. Mel Gibson is the voice of the Rhode Island rooster who helps with the rescue, and he's jauntier here than he is in *The Patriot.* (7/10/00) (1 hr. 33 mins.; G) *Pavilion.*

The Crew—Four curmudgeons (Burt Reynolds, Seymour Cassel, Richard Dreyfuss, and Dan Hedaya) attempt to hoodwink the manager of the retirement home in which they live. Directed by Michael Dinner. (1 hr. 28 mins.; PG-13) *Loews State; Centre Sunnyside; Cinemart; Atrium.*

★**Croupier**—Mike Hodges, the much-underrated English director, teams with screenwriter Paul Mayersberg in this sharp, cool drama about a would-be novelist, smashingly played by Clive Owen, who works as a croupier in a posh London casino. (Rainer; 5/1/00) (1 hr. 29 mins.; NR) *Clearview's Waverly; CC Murray Hill Cinemas; Clearview's First & 62nd St.; Clearview's Cobble Hill.*

Dancer in the Dark—Quirky, burpy pop icon Björk stars in this bleak Lars Von Trier film about an impoverished single mother who escapes the bleakness of her life by imagining herself in kicky Hollywood musicals. (2 hrs. 19 mins.; R) *UA Union Square; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.*

Double Parked—A family drama, chock-full of catharsis-by-numbers gimmicks, starring Noah Fleiss, William Sage, and Callie Thorne. (1 hr. 36 mins.; NR) *CC Village East.*

Duets—Three couples, three duets, follow their hearts to a karaoke contest in Omaha in this inspirational sludge redeemed by occasional flashes of brilliance in the performances of Paul Giamatti, playing a mouse-that-roared salesman, and Andre Braugher, as the ex-con he picks up on the road and enlists as his soulmate. Gwyneth Paltrow plays a virginal chorus girl in Vegas, and her dewiness makes her seem stunted. (Rainer; 9/25/00) (1 hr. 52 mins.; R) *UA Union Square; Clearview's Chelsea; Loews Kips Bay Theatre; CC Cinemas 1, 2, 3; Loews 42nd Street E Walk; Loews Orpheum 7; Sony Lincoln Square; Clearview's Cobble Hill; Pavilion.*

The Exorcist: The Version You've Never Seen—William Friedkin's horror masterpiece returns in a remastered director's cut, which includes, beyond a digitally remastered soundtrack, the legendary (and genuinely terrifying) spider-walk scene. Starring Linda Blair, Ellen Burstyn, and Max von Sydow. Screenplay by William Peter Blatty. (2 hrs. 10 mins.; R) *UA Union Square; Clearview's Chelsea; Loews Kips Bay Theatre; Loews Astor Plaza; Loews Orpheum 7; Nova; Sony Lincoln Square; Bay Plaza; Concourse Plaza; Whitestone; Linden Boulevard Multiplex; Pavilion; Ridgewood; UA Marboro; UA Movies at Sheepshead Bay; Canarsie; Centre Sunnyside; Jackson Triplex; Main Street Cinemas; UA Astoria; UA Crossbay; UA Movieworld; Atrium; UA Hylan Plaza; UA Movies at Staten Island.*

The Eyes of Tammy Faye—A mocking, self-satisfied documentary about the weepy evangelist–mascara maven. (1 hr. 19 mins.; NR) *Cinema Village.*

Gimme Shelter—The 1970 documentary by the Maysles brothers and Charlotte Zwerin about the Rolling Stones at Altamont is still compelling, but it's structured as a nightmare symbol for the demise of the Love Generation, which seems bogus. The tragedy at Altamont, in which a Hell's Angels enforcer stabbed a gun-wielding fan to death—three other fans died there—had a lot more to do with greed and bad planning than with the wrath of God. The film does present, however, the best full-scale portrait of Mick Jagger in his pansexual prime. (Rainer; 8/21/00) (1 hr. 31 mins.; NR) *Film Forum.*

★**Girl on the Bridge**—Patrice Leconte's stylish, opportunistic romance mixes up everything from Fellini and Ophuls to forties film noir and fairy tales and occultism. Daniel Auteuil plays a has-been knife-thrower, and Vanessa Paradis is his new recruit in the act. They have an intriguing Svengali-Trilby thing going on, and the knife-throwing scenes are so rattling that you leave the theater grateful you weren't nicked. (Rainer; 8/7/00) (1 hr. 37 mins.; R) *Clearview's First & 62nd St..*

★**Gladiator**—Ridley Scott's latest is an attempt to make a Roman epic on the scale of *Spartacus* or *Ben-Hur* while, at the same time, presenting us with a hero, Russell Crowe's Maximus, who is monumentally withdrawn. Crowe's intensity holds the film together. Richard Harris, Joaquin Phoenix, and, in his last role, Oliver Reed contribute some entertaining moments. (Rainer; 5/15/00) (2 hrs. 30 mins.; R) *CO Worldwide Cinemas; UA Gemini.*

Goya in Bordeaux—Carlos Saura's examination of the life of Francisco de Goya (Francisco Rabal), the Spanish artist who, as depicted here, is a ravaged old man escaping his haunted past by throwing himself into his artwork. Co-stars Jose Coronado, Dafne Fernandez, and Maribel Verdu. (1 hr. 34 mins.; R) *Quad Cinema.*

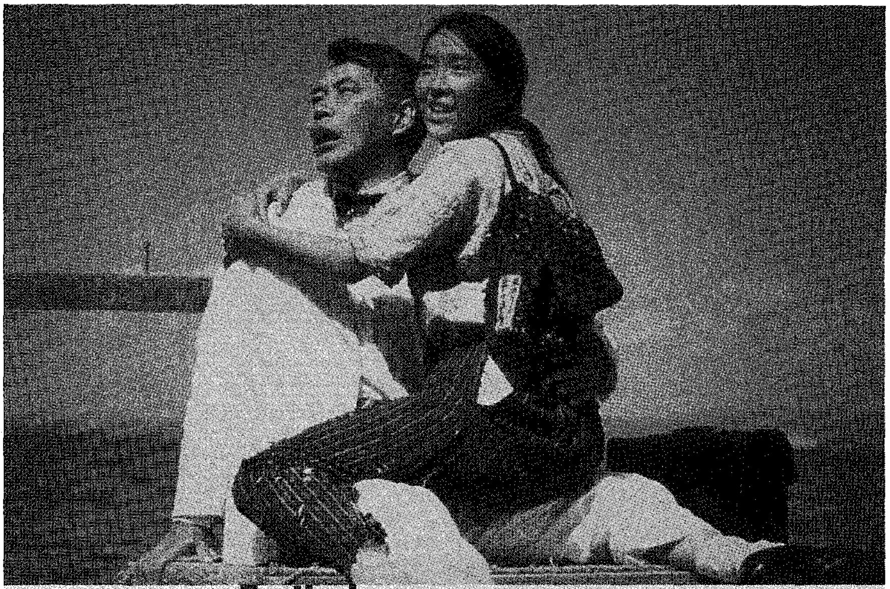
Highlander: Endgame—With any luck, the name says it all. (1 hr. 26 mins.; R) *New Coliseum; Bay Plaza; Whitestone; Linden Boulevard Multiplex; Cinemart; UA Astoria.*

I'm the One That I Want—Margaret Cho's critically acclaimed one-woman show, in which she recounts her grim experiences starring in a fast-canceled ABC sitcom, finally makes it to the big screen. (1 hr. 36 mins.; NR) *Quad Cinema.*

★**Into the Arms of Strangers**—A revealing documentary about the brief period in which Britain was able to bring in more than 10,000 children, mostly Jews from Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia, in the nine months before the outbreak of WWII. The interviewees, many of them grown-up rescued children, are full of harrowing stories. (Rainer; 9/25/00) (; NR) *Sony Lincoln Square.*

★**Madadayo**—Akira Kurosawa's last film, made in 1993 but only being released now, is a highly formalized and serene work about a beloved university professor (Tatsuo Matsumura) and his students. It's a movie about how kindness keeps one from despair, and it has a valedictory quality that ultimately is profoundly moving. (2 hrs. 14 mins.; NR) *Cinema Village.*

Nurse Betty—Neil LaBute directed this one but didn't write it, which probably explains why it lacks his usual note of noxious misanthropy. It's a rather sweet and blobby romantic comedy star-



Festivals

Pacific Apertures

Couch potatoes who love Japanese cinema are in luck. Beginning October 1, the Sundance Channel presents "Window on Japan," a monthlong festival showcasing everything from genre films to *anime* to works by acknowledged masters. Highlights include *Dr. Akagi (Kanzo Sensei)*, the tale of a doctor (Akira Emoto, pictured left) who's known as "Dr. Liver" because of his obsession with hepatitis; *Ghost in the Shell (Kokaku kidotai)*, an *anime* feature involving a cyborg heroine in hot pursuit of a nefarious supercomputer; and *Gonin*, a yakuza thriller starring Japanese superstar "Beat" Takeshi Kitano.

Photograph courtesy of the Sundance Channel

ring Renée Zelwegger as a Kansas waitress who, in a fugue state following the murder of her crumbum car-salesman husband, hits the road for L.A. to find her true dreamboat: a soap-opera actor (Gregg Kinnear) who she believes is really the character he is playing. Morgan Freeman and Chris Rock turn up as hit-men trailing Betty, and they have a funny rapport. (Rainer; 8/14/00) (1 hr. 49 mins.; R) *Loews Village; Loews 19th St. East; Loews Kips Bay Theatre; Loews Coronet; Clearview's Park and 86th St.; Clearview's Olympia; Sony Lincoln Square; Bay Plaza; Whitestone; BAM Rose Cinemas; Clearview's Cobble Hill; Pavilion; UA Movies at Sheepshead Bay; Kaufman Astoria Cinema; Main Street Cinemas; UA Crossbay II; UA Movieworld; Atrium; UA Movies at Staten Island.*

★**Nutty Professor 2: The Klumps**—Eddie Murphy once again divides himself up into an entire family, and he gives an extraordinarily rich performance in what is otherwise a gross-out teen pic. His ripening artistry deserves a better movie. (Rainer; 8/14/00) (2 hrs.; PG-13) *Whitestone; Linden Boulevard Multiplex.*

The Original Kings of Comedy—Spike Lee takes a swing at the stand-up-comedy-concert genre, documenting the talents of Steve Harvey, D. L. Hughley, Bernie Mac, and Cedric the Entertainer. (2 hrs. 12 mins.; R) *Loews Village; Loews Kips Bay Theatre; Loews 42nd Street E Walk; Loews 84th Street; Bay Plaza; Concourse Plaza; Whitestone; Linden Boulevard Multiplex; Kaufman Astoria Cinema; UA Crossbay.*

Paragraph 175—Filmmaking team Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman, best known for *The Celluloid Closet*, present this deeply affecting documentary focusing on the lives of five gay men and one lesbian who survived the horrors of World War II and, in some cases, concentration camps. Narrated by Rupert Everett. (1 hr. 21 mins.; NR) *Film Forum.*

Place Vendôme—Catherine Deneuve plays the alcoholic widow of a debt-ridden gem dealer in this moody, well-paced drama directed by Nicole Garcia. Deneuve seems to have grown into her world-weariness: She's radiantly sodden here. (Rainer; 8/38/00) (1 hr. 37 mins.; R) *Paris Theatre; Kew Gardens Cinemas.*

The Prince of Central Park—A young musical prodigy (Frankie Nasso) runs away from home to escape the clutches of his foster mom (Cathy Moriarty) and starts living out of Dumpsters in Central Park—until he meets a kindly couple (Kathleen Turner and Danny Aiello) who really, really want to adopt him. (1 hr. 49 mins.; PG-13) *CC Angelika Film Center; CC Sutton; UA Movies at Staten Island.*

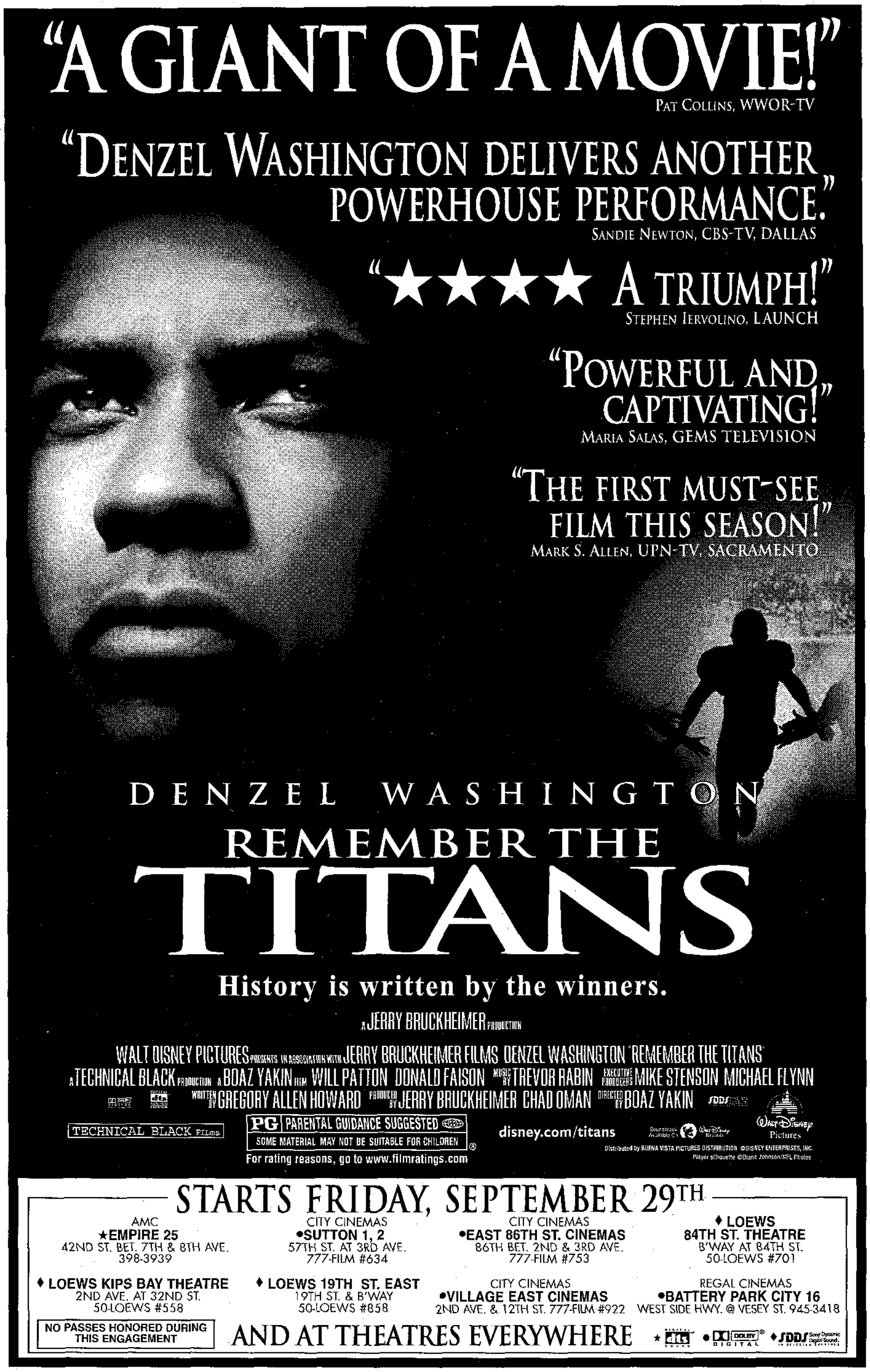
★**Pola X**—Leos Carax, bad boy of French cinema, directed this startling freeform adaptation of Herman Melville's novel *Pierre, or The Ambiguities,* and it's maddening, fascinating, rapt. *Pola X* accomplishes what all successful literary adaptations must: He conveys the emotions we felt when we read the book. Guillaume Depardieu and Katerina Golubeva star as the brother and half-sister fated for destruction. (Rainer; 8/11/00) (1 hr. 34 mins; R) *CC Angelika Film Center.*

The Replacements—This movie deserves a historical footnote for being the most rabidly anti-union movie in memory. Gene Hackman is a football coach who is brought in during a pro-league strike to shape up a team of replacements headed by quarterback Keanu Reeves. The scabs are all goony and lovable, and the pros are all pond scum. (Rainer; 8/28/00) (2 hrs.; PG-13) *Loews State.*

RiFiFi—All but unseen since its 1955 release, Jules Dassin's triumphantly amoral crime thriller boasts,

Ground Rules:

These brief reviews, where noted, are condensed versions of reviews by Peter Rainer…A ★ denotes a current release that *New York* recommends, ranging from best-of-the-year picks to worthy curios to flawed movies with one outstanding element…Reviews are followed by the theaters where the film is playing.


"A GIANT OF A MOVIE!"
PAT COLLINS, WWOR-TV

"DENZEL WASHINGTON DELIVERS ANOTHER POWERHOUSE PERFORMANCE."
SANDIE NEWTON, CBS-TV, DALLAS

"★★★★ A TRIUMPH!"
STEPHEN IERVOLINO, LAUNCH

"POWERFUL AND CAPTIVATING!"
MARIA SALAS, GEMS TELEVISION

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REMEMBER THE TITANS

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777-FILM #753

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♦ LOEWS KIPS BAY THEATRE
2ND AVE. AT 32ND ST.
50-LOEWS #558

♦ LOEWS 19TH ST. EAST
19TH ST. & B'WAY
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CITY CINEMAS
•VILLAGE EAST CINEMAS
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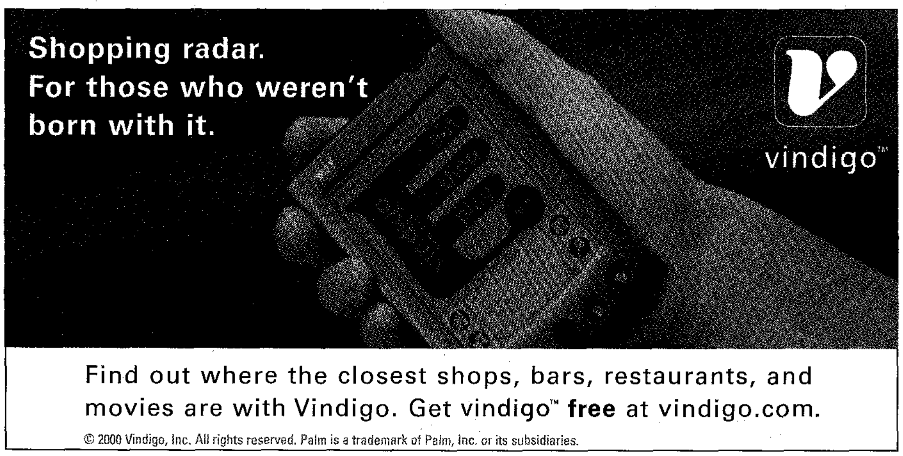
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among other things, a 30-minute robbery scene sans music or dialogue. (1 hr. 58 mins.; NR) *The Screening Room; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.*

Saving Grace—Brenda Blethyn stars as Grace, a dottering widow who, faced with a huge debt and the possibility of losing her house, comes up with a scheme to transform her garden into a veritable hemp highway. (1 hr. 33 mins.; R) *CC Angelika Film Center; CC Murray Hill Cinemas; Clearview's Chelsea; CC Cinemas 1, 2, 3; UA East; Sony Lincoln Square; Clearview's Cobble Hill; Centre Sunnyside; Kew Gardens Cinemas; North Shore Towers; UA Movies at Bayside; YWCA Cine-Club.*

Scary Movie—A half-baked satire of modern teen splatter flicks from Keenan Ivory Wayans. (1 hr. 28 mins.; R) *CC Village East; CC Crown Gotham; Loews 42nd Street E Walk; Bay Plaza; Concourse Plaza; Whitestone; Linden Boulevard Multiplex; UA Astoria; UA Crossbay II; UA Movieworld; UA Movies at Staten Island.*

Shower—This bittersweet examination of Chinese culture takes place in a public bathhouse about to be closed down by a young entrepreneur. (1 hr., 32 mins.; PG-13) *North Shore Towers.*

Sing-a-long Sound of Music—A truly terrifying concept. Audience members clad in tacky curtains scream out all their faves from the classic 1965 musical. Starring Julie Andrews, Christopher Plummer, and numerous fanatics dressed as brown paper parcels all tied up with string. (3 hrs.; G) *Clearview's Ziegfeld.*

Space Cowboys—Clint Eastwood stars in and directs this over-the-hill-gang buddyfest starring himself, James Garner, Tommy Lee Jones, and Donald Sutherland as ex–Air Force pilots who, 40 years after they were screwed by NASA, finally get their shot on a space mission. (They have to fix a Russian satellite!) It's genial at times, but the movie-star cronyism gets in the way of your enjoyment, and theres no bliss in this film's view of outer space. The old astronauts might as well be day laborers at the planetarium. (Rainer; 8/14/00) (2 hrs.; PG-13) *Loews Kips Bay Theatre; Loews 72nd St. East; Loews 84th Street; Cinemart.*

The Tao of Steve—In Jenniphr Goodman's directorial debut, Donal Logue plays Dex, a way-overweight rogue who still manages to be lucky with the ladies despite his size-44 jeans. Greer Goodman plays Syd, the one woman who's seemingly insusceptible to his charms. (1 hr. 30 mins.; R) *CC Angelika Film Center; Clearview's First & 62nd St.; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.*

30 Days—A bunch of kids fresh out of college try to find love and success in the big city. Starring Jerry Adler, Arija Bareikis, and Ben Shenkman. (1 hr 27 mins; R) *CC Village East; CC Sutton.*

This Is Spinal Tap—Rob Reiner's classic satire of the heavy-metal scene, starring Michael McKean, Christopher Guest, and Harry Shearer. (1 hr. 22 mins.; R) *UA Union Square.*

Turn It Up—Expect lots of blood and .22s in this crime thriller starring the Fugees' Pras, who plays a young aspiring hip-hop artist who falls in with a band of villains. Co-stars Ja-Rule and Vondie Curtis-Hall. (1 hr. 34 mins.; R) *Bay Plaza.*

Under Suspicion—Two young girls have been raped and murdered; Gene Hackman stars as the man who stands accused; Morgan Freeman co-stars as the police captain who has a lot of questions to ask. Directed by Stephen Hopkins. (1 hr. 50 mins.; R) *CC Village East; Clearview's Chelsea; Clearview's First & 62nd St.; Clearview's 62nd and Broadway; Kew Gardens Cinemas.*

Up at the Villa—Enervated adaptation of the Somerset Maugham novella about murder and romance, set in Fascist Tuscany and starring Sean Penn and Kristin Scott Thomas as unlikely conspirators. (Rainer; 5/15/00) (1 hr. 55 mins.; PG-13) .

Urban Legends: The Final Cut—More fresh-faced college students get slashed, splayed, and dismembered in this sequel to the tepid 1998 horror film. Co-stars Joseph (as in Joey) Lawrence—in itself, a reason to run. (1 hr. 40 mins.; R) *Atrium; CC Village East; CC Murray Hill Cinemas; Loews 19th St. East; Loews 42nd Street E Walk; Loews Orpheum 7; UA Gemini; Loews 84th Street; Bay Plaza; Concourse Plaza; Whitestone; Kent Triplex; Linden Boulevard Multiplex; Pavilion; Ridgewood; UA Marboro; UA Movies at Sheepshead Bay; Kaufman Astoria Cinema; Main Street Cinemas; UA Crossbay II; UA Movies at Bayside; UA Movieworld; UA Hylan Plaza; UA Movies at Staten Island; YWCA Cine-Club.*

Urbania—Something of a gay *After Hours,* director-screenwriter Jon Shear's film involves an insomniac (Dan Futterman) who becomes obsessed with a mysterious man, complete with tattoos, whom he sees on the street. He embarks on an endless search of Manhattan watering holes and runs into numerous eccentrics on the way. (1 hr. 43 mins.; R) *CC Angelika Film Center; Clearview's Chelsea.*

The Virgin Suicides—The material—five suburban adolescent girls kill themselves off, poetically, inexplicably—is perhaps too woozy for the rueful, mythological treatment it gets here, but debut director Sofia Coppola has a fine, fresh eye and a way with actors, among them Kirsten Dunst, James Woods, and Kathleen Turner. (Rainer; 5/1/00) (1 hr. 37 mins.; R) *Clearview's Waverly.*

The Watcher—Jampes Spader stars as an ex–FBI agent who (surprise, surprise) comes out of retirement in the hopes of capturing his old nemesis, a creepy serial killer played by Keanu Reeves. (1 hr. 32 mins.; R) *UA Union Square; CC Murray Hill Cinemas; Clearview's Chelsea; Loews 42nd Street E Walk; Clearview's First & 62nd St.; Loews Orpheum 7; Clearview's Metro Cinema; Loews 84th Street; Bay Plaza; Concourse Plaza; Whitestone; Linden Boulevard Multiplex; Pavilion; UA Marboro; UA Movies at Sheepshead Bay; Centre Sunnyside; Main Street Cinemas; UA Astoria; UA Crossbay II; UA Movies at Bayside; UA Movieworld; Atrium; UA Hylan Plaza; UA Movies at Staten Island; YWCA Cine-Club.*

The Way of the Gun—Ryan Phillipe and Benicio Del Toro play two hardened criminals whose attempt to kidnap a wealthy woman (Juliette Lewis) gets seriously botched. Written by *The Usual Suspects* screenwriter Christopher McQuarrie. (2 hrs.; R) *UA Union Square; Loews Kips Bay Theatre; Clearview's Park and 86th St.; UA Gemini; Kaufman Astoria Cinema.*

Woman on Top—Penélope Cruz stars as a spicy gourmet chef who likes to always be in control, whether she's dicing chilies or mounting men. When she moves from Brazil to San Francisco, she finds herself starring in a hit television show and causing numerous male hearts to flutter. (1 hr. 33 mins.; R) *UA Union Square; Clearview's Chelsea; Loews 42nd Street E Walk; Clearview's First & 62nd St.; New Coliseum; Nova; Sony Lincoln Square; Bay Plaza; Pavilion; Ridgewood; UA Movies at Sheepshead Bay; Centre Sunnyside; Jackson Triplex; Plaza; UA Astoria; UA Movieworld; Atrium; UA Movies at Staten Island.*

Manhattan

Below 14th Street

CC Angelika Film Center—18 W. Houston St. (212-995-2000) *The Girl on the Bridge; Pola X; The Prince of Central Park; Saving Grace; The Tao of Steve; Urbania.*

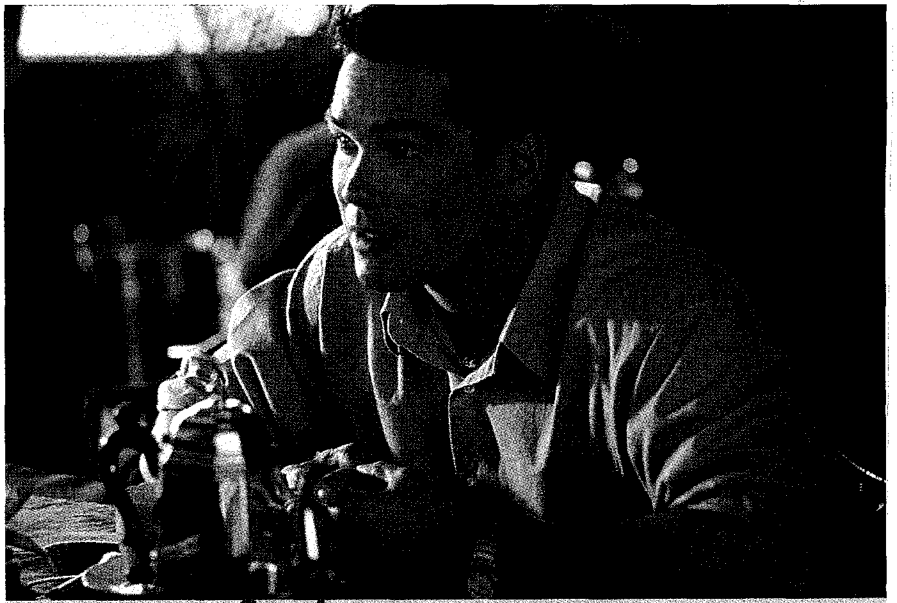
CC Village East—189 Second Ave., at 12th St. (212-529-6799) *Cecil B. Demented; The Cell; Double Parked; Scary Movie; 30 Days; Under Suspicion; Urban Legends: The Final Cut.*

Cinema Village—22 E. 12th St. (212-924-3363) *Bittersweet Motel; The Eyes of Tammy Faye; Madadayo.*

Clearview's Waverly—323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (777-FILM#603) *Croupier; The Virgin Suicides.*

Film Forum—209 W. Houston St. (212-727-8110) *Gimme Shelter; House of Wax in 3-D; Paragraph 175; Twilight: Los Angeles.* (See also "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

Loews Village—66 Third Ave., at 11th St. (50-



Opening
Oh, Happy Gays

Nobody hurls himself off a balcony in 'The Broken Hearts Club,' and though the film revolves around the 28th-birthday party of a homosexual West Hollywood photographer (Timothy Olyphant), the comparison to 'The Boys in the Band' ends there. There are no self-professed "pock-marked Jew fairies" and nary an exclamation of "Attention must not be paid." Instead, this tale of self-affirmation includes lines like "I can't remember when I first realized I was gay, only the first time I knew it was okay. It was when I met these guys—my friends." And requisite cute boys (Dean Cain, pictured). Hmmm . . . sounds like 'St. Elmo's Fire II.' Begins September 29.

Photograph by Cindy Kelleher

LOEWS#952) *Almost Famous; Bait; Nurse Betty; The Original Kings of Comedy.*

Quad Cinema—34 W. 13th St. (212-255-8800) *Aimée & Jaguar; Goya in Bordeaux; I'm the One That I Want; Left Luggage.*

The Screening Room—54 Varick St. (below Canal) (212-334-2100) *RiFiFi; The Decalogue; The Fate of Lee Khan; The Saragossa Manuscript.* (See also "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

UA Union Square—13th St. and Broadway (212-253-2225) *The Art of War; Bring It On; Dancer in the Dark; Duets; The Exorcist: The Version You've Never Seen; Ran; This Is Spinal Tap; The Watcher; The Way of the Gun; The Way of the Gun; Woman on Top.*

14th–41st Streets

CC Murray Hill Cinemas—160 E. 34th St. (212-689-6548) *Croupier; Saving Grace; Urban Legends: The Final Cut; The Watcher.*

Clearview's Chelsea—260 W. 23rd St. (777-FILM#597) *Duets; The Exorcist: The Version You've Never Seen; Saving Grace; Under Suspicion; Urbania; The Watcher; Woman on Top.*

Clearview's Chelsea West—333 W. 23rd St. (777-FILM#614) *The Art of War; The Cell.*

Loews 19th St. East—890 Broadway, at 19th St. (50-LOEWS#858) *Almost Famous; Bait; Nurse Betty; Urban Legends: The Final Cut.*

Loews Kips Bay Theatre—570 Second Ave. (505-6397#558) *Almost Famous; Bait; Bring It On; The Cell; Duets; The Exorcist: The Version You've Never Seen; Nurse Betty; The Original Kings of Comedy; Space Cowboys; The Way of the Gun.*

42nd–60th Streets

CC Cinemas 1, 2, 3—1001 Third Ave., at 60th St. (212-753-6022) *The Cell; Duets; Saving Grace.*

CC Crown Gotham—969 Third Ave., bet. 57th and 58th Sts. (212-759-2262) *Scary Movie.*

CC Eastside Playhouse—919 Third Ave., bet. 55th and 56th Sts. (212-755-3020) *Butterfly.*

CC Sutton—205 E. 57th St. (212-759-1411) *30 Days; The Prince of Central Park.*

Clearview's 59th Street East—239 E. 59th St. (777-FILM#615) *Bring It On.*

Clearview's Ziegfeld—141 W. 54th St. (777-FILM#602) *Sing-a-long Sound of Music.*

CO Worldwide Cinemas—340 W. 50th St. (505-CINE#610) *Gladiator; High Fidelity; Me, Myself & Irene; Mission: Impossible 2; Shaft.*

Loews 42nd Street E Walk—42nd Street at Eighth Ave. (50-LOEWS#572) *Almost Famous; The Art of War; Bait; The Cell; Duets; The Original Kings of Comedy; Scary Movie; Urban Legends: The Final Cut; The Watcher; Woman on Top.*

Loews Astor Plaza—44th St. bet. Broadway and Eighth Ave. (50-LOEWS#699) *The Exorcist: The Version You've Never Seen.*

Loews Coronet—993 Third Ave., bet. 59th and 60th Sts. (505-CINE#608) *Nurse Betty.*

Loews State—1540 Broadway, bet. 45th and 46th Sts. (50-LOEWS#901) *The Crew; Human Resources; The Perfect Storm; The Replacements.*

Paris Theatre—4 W. 58th St. (212-688-3800) *Place Vendôme.*

61st Street and Above, East Side

CC 86th St. East—210 E. 86th St. (777-FILM#763) *Bring It On; Crime and Punishment in Suburbia; Highlander: Endgame; Under Suspicion; Woman on Top.*

Clearview's Beekman—1254 Second Ave., bet. 65th and 66th Sts. (777-FILM#606) *Almost Famous.*

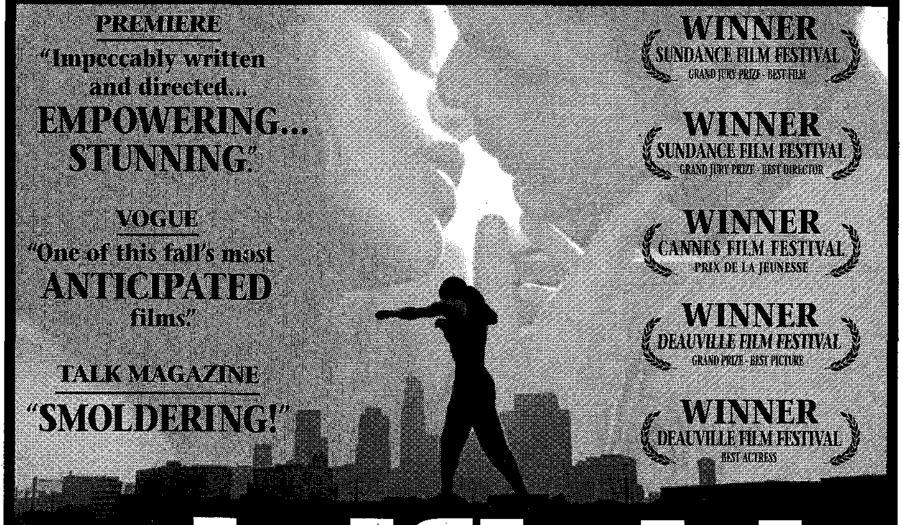
Clearview's First & 62nd St.—400 E. 62nd St. (777-FILM#957) *Croupier; Girl on the Bridge; Sunshine; The Tao of Steve; Under Suspicion; The Watcher; Woman on Top.*

Clearview's Park and 86th St.—125 E. 86th St. (777-FILM#604) *Nurse Betty; The Way of the Gun.*

Loews 72nd St. East—1230 Third Ave., bet. 71st and 72nd Sts. (50-LOEWS#704) *Space Cowboys.*

Loews New York Twin—1271 Second Ave., bet. 66th and 67th Sts. (50-LOEWS#698) *Bait.*

Loews Orpheum 7—1538 Third Ave., at 86th St. (50-LOEWS#964) *Almost Famous; The Art of War; Bait; The Cell; Duets; The Exorcist: The Version You've Nev-*



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er Seen; Urban Legends: The Final Cut; The Watcher.

UA East—1629 First Ave., at 85th St. (212-249-5100) *Saving Grace.*

UA Gemini—1210 Second Ave., at 64th St. (212-832-1670) *Gladiator; Urban Legends: The Final Cut; The Way of the Gun.*

61st Street and Above, West Side

Clearview's 62nd and Broadway—1871 Broadway, at 62nd St. (777-FILM#864) *Under Suspicion.*

Clearview's Metro Cinema—2626 Broadway, bet. 99th and 100th Sts. (777-FILM#609) *Bait; The Watcher.*

Clearview's Olympia—2770 Broadway, bet. 106th and 107th Sts. (777-FILM#613) *Almost Famous; Nurse Betty.*

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas—30 Lincoln Plaza, on Broadway bet. 62nd and 63rd Sts. (212-757-2280) *Goya in Bordeau; Aimée & Jaguar; An Affair of Love; Dancer in the Dark; RiFiFi; Solas; The Tao of Steve; The Wind Will Carry Us.*

Loews 84th Street—2310 Broadway, at 84th St. (50-LOEWS#701) *The Cell; The Original Kings of Comedy; Space Cowboys; Urban Legends: The Final Cut; The Watcher.*

New Coliseum—701 W. 181st St. (212-740-1545) *Bait; Bring It On; Highlander: Endgame; Woman on Top.*

Nova—3589 Broadway, bet. 147th and 148th Sts. (212-862-5728) *Bait; The Exorcist: The Version You've Never Seen; Woman on Top.*

Sony Lincoln Square—1998 Broadway, at 68th St. (50-LOEWS#638) *Almost Famous; Bring It On; The Cell; Duets; The Exorcist: The Version You've Never Seen; Into the Arms of Strangers; Nurse Betty; Saving Grace; Woman on Top.*

Bronx

Bay Plaza—2210 Bartow Ave., behind Bay Plaza Mall (777-FILM#833) *The Art of War; Backstage; Bait; Bring It On; The Cell; Highlander: Endgame; The Exorcist: The Version You've Never Seen; Nurse Betty; The Original Kings of Comedy; Scary Movie; Turn It Up; Urban Legends: The Final Cut; The Watcher; Woman on Top.*

Concourse Plaza—214 E. 161th St. (718-588-8800) *The Art of War; Bait; Bring It On; The Cell; The Exorcist: The Version You've Never Seen; The Original Kings of Comedy; Scary Movie; Urban Legends: The Final Cut; The Watcher.*

Whitestone—2505 Bruckner Blvd., at Hutchinson River Pkwy. (718-409-9030) *The Art of War; Bait; Bless the Child; Bring It On; The Cell; The Exorcist: The Version You've Never Seen; Highlander: Endgame; Nurse Betty; Nutty Professor 2: The Klumps; The Original Kings of Comedy; Scary Movie; Urban Legends: The Final Cut; The Watcher; What Lies Beneath.*

Brooklyn

BAM Rose Cinemas—30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770) *Aimée & Jaguar; Nurse Betty; Solas.* (See also "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

Brooklyn Heights—70 Henry St. (718-596-7070) *Call theater for showtimes.*

Clearview's Cobble Hill—265 Court St. (718-596-9113) *Bait; Croupier; Duets; Nurse Betty; Saving Grace.*

CO Alpine—6817 Fifth Ave., at 69th St. (777-FILM#580) *Call theater for showtimes.*

CO Fortway—6720 Ft. Hamilton Pkwy., at 68th St. (777-FILM#578) *Call theater for showtimes.*

CO Kings Plaza—5201 Kings Plaza; Flatbush Ave. at Ave. U (777-FILM#579) *Call theater for showtimes.*

CO Kingsway—946 Kings Hwy., at Coney Island Ave. (777-FILM#577) *Call theater for showtimes.*

Kent Triplex—Coney Island Ave. at Ave. H (718-338-3371) *Bait; Bring It On; Urban Legends: The Final Cut.*

Linden Boulevard Multiplex—Linden Blvd. and Eldert Lane (718-277-0303) *The Art of War; Backstage; Bait; Bless The Child; Bring It On; The Cell; Highlander: Endgame; The Exorcist: The Version You've Never Seen; Nutty Professor 2: The Klumps; The Original Kings of Comedy; Scary Movie; Urban Legends: The Final Cut; The Watcher.*

Pavilion—188 Prospect Park West (718-369-0838) *Almost Famous; Bait; Bring It On; Chicken Run; Duets; The Exorcist: The Version You've Never Seen; Nurse Betty; Urban Legends: The Final Cut; The Watcher; Woman on Top.*

Ridgewood—55-27 Myrtle Ave., at Putnam Ave. (718-821-5993) *Bait; Bring It On; The Exorcist: The Version You've Never Seen; Urban Legends: The Final Cut; Woman on Top.*

UA Marboro—6817 Bay Pkwy., at 69th St. (718-232-4000) *Bring It On; The Exorcist: The Version You've Never Seen; Urban Legends: The Final Cut; The Watcher.*

UA Movies at Sheepshead Bay—3907 Shore Pkwy, off Exit 9 at Belt Pkwy. (718-615-1700) *Almost Famous; The Art of War; Bait; Bring It On; The Cell; The Exorcist: The Version You've Never Seen; Nurse Betty; Urban Legends: The Final Cut; The Watcher; Woman on Top.*

Queens

Canarsie—9310 Ave. L, at E. 93rd St. (718-251-0700) *Backstage; Bait; The Exorcist: The Version You've Never Seen.*

Centre Sunnyside—42-17 Queens Blvd. (718-361-6869) *Bait; The Crew; The Exorcist: The Version You've Never Seen; Saving Grace; The Watcher; Woman on Top.*

Cinemart—106-03 Metropolitan Ave., at 72nd Rd., Forest Hills (718-261-2244) *The Cell; The Crew; Highlander: Endgame; Space Cowboys; What Lies Beneath.*

CO Cinema City—183-15 Horace Harding Expy., at 183rd St., Fresh Meadows (777-FILM#592) *Call theater for showtimes.*

CO Fresh Meadows—Eastbound Service Rd. at 190th St. (777-FILM#619) *Call theater for showtimes.*

College Point Multiplex—28-55 Ulmer St., Whitestone (718-886-4900) *Almost Famous; The Art of War; Bait; Bring It On; The Cell; The Exorcist: The Version You've Never Seen; Nurse Betty; The Original Kings of Comedy; Urban Legends: The Final Cut; The Watcher; What Lies Beneath; X-Men.*

Jackson Triplex—82nd St. at Roosevelt Ave. (718-478-6777) *Bait; The Exorcist: The Version You've Never Seen; Woman on Top.*

Kaufman Astoria Cinema—38th St. at 35th Ave. (718-786-2020) *Almost Famous; Bait; Bring It On; The Cell; Nurse Betty; The Original Kings of Comedy; Urban Legends: The Final Cut; The Way of the Gun.*

Kew Gardens Cinemas—81-05 Lefferts Blvd. (718-441-9835) *Autumn in New York; Butterfly; Place Vendôme; Saving Grace; Solas; Under Suspicion.*

Main Street Cinemas—72-66 Main St. (718-263-4828) *Bait; Bring It On; The Exorcist: The Version You've Never Seen; Nurse Betty; Urban Legends: The Final Cut; The Watcher.*

North Shore Towers—27-10 Grand Central Pkwy., Floral Park (718-229-7702) *Saving Grace; Shower; Sunshine.*

Plaza—103–14 Roosevelt Ave., at 103rd St., Corona (718-639-0012) *Bait; Woman on Top.*

Sony Bay Terrace—211-01 26th Ave., at Bell Blvd., Bayside (777-FILM#712) *Call theater for showtimes.*

Sony Elmwood—57-02 Hoffman Dr., Elmhurst (777-FILM#733) *Call theater for showtimes.*

UA Astoria—28-60 Steinway St. (718-726-1279) *The Art of War; Highlander: Endgame; The Exorcist: The Version You've Never Seen; Scary Movie; The Watcher; Woman on Top.*

UA Brandon Cinema—70-20 Austin St., Forest Hills (718-544-1020) *Bait; The Exorcist: The Version You've Never Seen.*

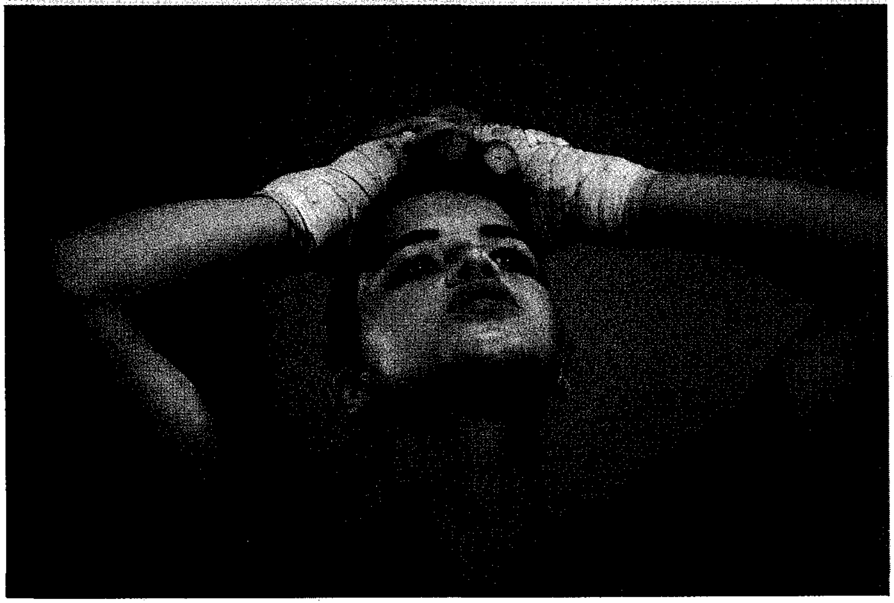
UA Crossbay—94-11 Rockaway Blvd., at Woodhaven Blvd., Ozone Park (718-848-1738) *Bait; The Exorcist: The Version You've Never Seen; The Original Kings of Comedy.*

UA Crossbay II—92-10 Rockaway Blvd., at 93rd St., Ozone Park (718-641-5330) *Bring It On; The Cell; Nurse Betty; The Perfect Storm; Scary Movie; Urban Legends: The Final Cut; The Watcher.*

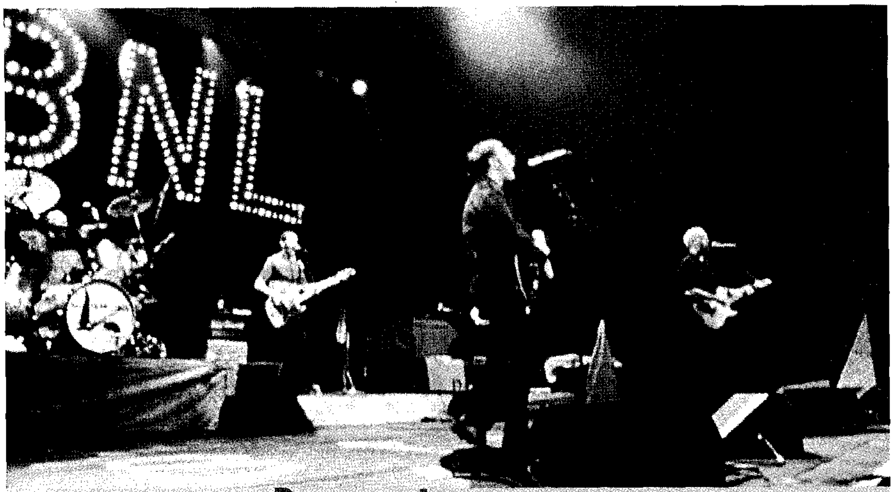
UA Midway—108-22 Queens Blvd., at 71st Ave., Forest Hills (718-544-5545) *Almost Famous; The Art of War; Bring It On; Duets; Nurse Betty; Urban Legends: The Final Cut; The Watcher; Woman on Top.*

Opening Hit Movie

In *Girlfight*, winner of the Best Directing Award and a shared Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance 2000 Film Festival, a fiery young woman (newcomer Michelle Rodriguez, pictured) skips the anger-management classes and goes straight to kicking some major ass in the boxing ring. With the help of her mentorly coach (Jaime Tirelli), she slowly but surely learns how to be vulnerable, loving, and responsible—for myriad split lips. This highly anticipated New York indie film is the feature debut of writer-director Karyn Kusama. Opens September 29.



Photograph by Andrea Morini.



Documentary

Ladies' Night

You loved him in his days at the Peach Pit in 'Beverly Hills 90210' and were surprised and impressed by his performance in 'Love and Death on Long Island.' Now Jason Priestley's again trying to confound low expectations with his directorial debut, 'Barenaked in America.' The documentary showcases the Barenaked Ladies (pictured), those ubiquitous Canadian pop crooners, during their 1998 U.S. tour, and its fly-on-the-wall approach makes us feel as if we're right there with them. Too bad that's not where most of us really want to spend the weekend. Begins September 29.

UA Movies at Bayside—38-39 Bell Blvd., at 39th Ave. (718-225-7711) *Bring It On; Saving Grace; Urban Legends: The Final Cut; The Watcher.*

UA Movieworld—242-02 61st Ave., off Exit 31, Douglaston (718-423-7200) *Bait; The Exorcist: The Version You've Never Seen; Nurse Betty; Scary Movie; Urban Legends: The Final Cut; The Watcher; Woman on Top.*

Staten Island

Atrium—680 Arthur Kill Rd., nr. Richmond Ave., Eltingville (718-317-8300) *Almost Famous; Bait; Bring It On; The Crew; The Exorcist: The Version You've Never Seen; Nurse Betty; Urban Legends 2; The Watcher; Woman on Top.*

UA Hylan Plaza—107 Mill Rd., at Hylan Blvd., New Dorp (718-351-0805) *Almost Famous; Bait; The Exorcist: The Version You've Never Seen; Urban Legends: The Final Cut; The Watcher.*

UA Movies at Staten Island—141 E. Service Rd., at Victory Blvd., Travis (718-983-9600) *Almost Famous; Bait; Bring It On; The Cell; The Exorcist: The Version You've Never Seen; Nurse Betty; Scary Movie; The Prince of Central Park; Urban Legends: The Final Cut; The Watcher; What Lies Beneath; Woman on Top.*

Museums, Societies, Etc.

American Museum of the Moving Image—Through 10/1: "Ride Lonesome: A Budd Boetticher Retrospective." 9/30: *Buchanan Rides Alone* (1958); *The Rise and Fall of Legs Diamond* (1960). "Repertory Nights: New Prints of Classic Films." *Chinatown* (1974). 10/1: "Ride Lonesome: A Budd Boetticher Retrospective." *The Tall T* (1957); *The Comanche Station* (1960), introduced by Budd Boetticher and Burt Kennedy. "Repertory Nights: New Prints of Classic Films." *Chinatown*. 36-01 35th Ave., Astoria, Queens (718-784-0077). Tickets, $4.50–$8.50. Members and children under 4, free.

Anthology Film Archives—9/26: *Alma* (1998); *Hinterholz 8* (1998). 9/27: *Alma*; *The Girls' Room* (2000). 9/28: *Alma*; *The Apple* (1998); *The Silence* (1998). 9/29: *A Moment of Innocence* (1996); *Beyond the Clouds* (1994); *Gabbeh* (1997). 10/30: *A Moment of Innocence*; *The Apple*; *Beyond the Clouds*; *L'eclisse (Eclipse). 10/2: A Moment of Innocence*; *Gabbeh*; *The Silence.* 32 Second Ave. (212-505-5110); $8.

BAM Rose Cinemas—9/26: "Universal Sirk." *Imitation of Life* (1959). 9/27: "BAMcinématek Favorites." *The Mother and the Whore* (1973). 9/28: "Brooklyn Independents." *Girlfight* (2000). 9/29: "BAMcinématek Favorites." *The Conformist* (1970). 9/30: "John Woo—Hong Kong Style." *Once a Thief* (1990). 10/1: "By the Light of Nykvist." *Crimes and Misdemeanors* (1989). *10/2:* "Orson Welles: On Stage/On Film." *Casino Royale* (1967). 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770).

Cinema Classics—Through 9/27: "Big Stars, Early Films Festival." 9/26: *Four's a Crowd* (1928); *The Hatchet Man* (1932). 9/27: *Dark Horse* (1932); *The Big Shakedown* (1934). 332 E. 11th St. (212-675-6692); $5.

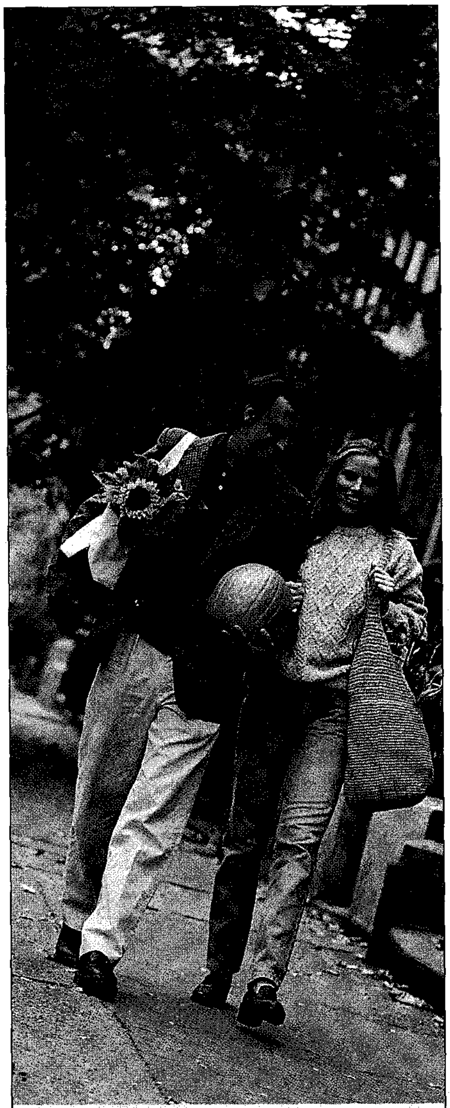
Film Society of Lincoln Center (The Walter Reade Theater)—Through 10/6: "Passion and Defiance: Silent Divas of the Italian Cinema." 9/26: *Assunta Spina* (1915); *Vedi Nauple E Po' Mori* (1924). 9/27: *Assunta Spina* (1915); *Royal Tiger* (1916). 9/28: *Flower of Evil* (1915); *Satanic Rhapsody* (1917). 9/29: *La Storia di una Donna (Story of a Woman)* (1920); *Flower of Evil*. 9/30: *Il Quadro di Osvaldo Mars (The Painting of Osvaldo Mars)* (1921); *Malombra* (1917); *Story of a Woman*. 65 W. 65th St., plaza level (212-875-5600); $8.50, $5 members, $4.50 seniors, $3 "Movies for Kids."

Ocularis—10/1: *Vivre Sa Vie (My Life to Live)* (1962). *10/2: La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc (The Passion of Joan of Arc)* (1928). At Galapagos, 70 N. 6th St., Williamsburg, Brooklyn; 718-388-8713. $5.

The Screening Room—"Hong Kong." 9/29–9/30: *The Fate of Lee Khan* (1973). "Weekend Classics." 10/1: *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961); *The Saragossa Manuscript* (1971). 54 Varick St. (212-334-2100); $9 ($6 for Sunday brunch patrons).

Two Boots Pioneer Theater—9/26–10/2: *Chuck and Buck* (2000); *Steal This Movie!* (2000). 155 E. 3rd St. (212-254-3300); $9, $6 seniors.

Photograph by Danny Nowak.



NEW YORK MAGAZINE'S
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theater

The Full Monty...Doll...Kyra Sedgwick

Photograph by Craig Schwartz.

Previews
New York's Finest

Well, if we had to have one racy 1997 movie adapted for Broadway, at least it wasn't 'Boogie Nights.' In fact, 'The Full Monty,' now transplanted from Sheffield to Buffalo, with book by Terrence McNally ('Ragtime'), score by David Yazbek, and direction by Jack O'Brien ('Damn Yankees'), has received suprisingly enthusiastic out-of-town reviews. Everybody's predicting that bachelorettes won't be the only ones cheering for these down-and-out lads who get down-and-dirty to make their down payments. Which makes you wonder: Shouldn't the guys in 'Naked Boys Singing' be just a little jealous? Previews begin September 25. (See "Broadway.")

Broadway

Previews and Openings

The Full Monty—Word of mouth is strong on this musical adaptation of the 1997 film about desperate, destitute men who have nothing to lose but their underwear. Music and lyrics by David Yazbek; book by Terrence McNally; directed by Jack O'Brien. $30–$85. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Previews begin 9/25 for a 10/26 opening. *Eugene O'Neill Theatre, 230 W. 49th St. (212-239-6200).*

Now Playing

Aida—The epic musical about the love affair between a Nubian slave and a cute Egyptian, with music by Elton John and lyrics by Tim Rice. Directed by Robert Falls with a book by Linda Woolverton and David Henry Hwang. Sets and costumes by Bob Crowley. $25–$70. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. *Palace Theatre, 1554 Broadway, at 47th St. (212-307-4747).*

Annie Get Your Gun—Cheryl Ladd plays Annie Oakley, the sharp-tongued, sharpshootin' gal from Cincinnati who eclipses her lover, Frank Butler (played by Patrick Cassidy), in Buffalo Bill's traveling Wild West Show. Irving Berlin did the lyrics and score; Peter Stone updated the book. $35–$80. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. *Marquis Theatre, 1535 Broadway, bet. 45th and 46th Sts. (212-307-4100).*

Beauty and the Beast—Disney's beast is back (no, not the mouse). Andrea McArdle blushes as the fair maiden; Steve Blanchard is the Beast. $25–$85. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. *Lunt-Fontanne Theatre, 205 W. 46th St. (212-307-4747).*

Cabaret—The Roundabout is to be roundly applauded for re-creating Sam Mendes's 1993 London production, even if with some diminishment. Aided by Rob Marshall as co-director and choreographer, Mendes confirms his directorial reputation with the nightclub scenes. This revival has enough to satisfy all but the most fastidious. (Simon: 3/30/98.) Now starring Lea Thompson. $25–$90. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 2 and 7. Opened: 3/19/98. *Studio 54, 254 W. 54th St. (212-239-6200).*

Chicago—It was a gamble to transfer the Encores! production of this musical to Broadway, but since it's about women who kill their men and the mercenary lawyer who gets them off, gambling seems like the merest peccadillo. Every bosom, pelvis, and long leg is in business to keep the women in the audience identifying, the men panting. (Simon: 11/30/98.) Now featuring Jasmine Guy and Charlotte D'Amboise $20–$85. Mon., Tues., Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 2 and 7. Opened: 11/14/96. *Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).*

Contact—This is billed as "a dance play by Susan Stroman and John Weidman," with what little there is of a play mostly by Weidman and the variety and plenitude of the dancing all Stroman. Its two shorter pieces and concluding longer one are of uneven merit but never without interest. Boyd Gaines, a delightful actor and inspired amateur dancer, performs with aplomb. Backed up by a terrific ensemble, Deborah Yates triumphs as the girl in yellow; as dancer, actress, woman, she is every man's dream and headed for a manifest career. (Simon: 10/25/99.) $55–$80. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. *Lincoln Center's Vivian Beaumont Theater, 150 W. 65th St. (212-239-6200).*

Copenhagen—A major hit in London, Michael Frayn's heady play about what might have happened when German physicist Werner Heisenberg visited Niels Bohr in 1941 stars Philip Bosco, Blair Brown, and Michael Cumpsty. $40–$65. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. *Royale Theatre, 242 W. 45th St. (212-239-6200).*

Dirty Blonde—Brash actress-author Claudia Shear stars in her play about two Gotham singles who meet at the grave of Mae West, sampling delicious vignettes from the life of the woman who said, "I'm no angel, but I've spread my wings a bit." $55–$65. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Wed. at 2, Sun. at 3. *Helen Hayes Theatre, 240 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).*

Fosse—A tribute to the late choreographer-director, whose swivelin'-hips-and-bowler-hat aesthetic came roaring back with the revival of *Chicago.* $65–$80. Mon., Tues, and Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 2 and 7, Sat. at 2. *Broadhurst Theatre, 235 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).*

Gore Vidal's The Best Man—See Simon, p. 86. $45–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. *Virginia Theatre, 245 W. 52nd St. (212-239-6200).*

Jekyll & Hyde—Man turns into beastly man, all in the name of science. $45–$80. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened: 4/28/97. *Plymouth Theatre, 236 W. 45th St. (212-239-6200).*

Kiss Me, Kate—With a score jammed with some of the best-known theater songs ever written, it's no wonder each generation has rediscovered this gem since its 1948 Broadway premiere. Now Brian Stokes Mitchell and Marin Mazzie interpret Cole Porter's feuding couple—two actors who play the Shrew's Kate and Petruchio in a play-within-the-musical. $25–$80. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. *Martin Beck Theatre, 302 W. 45th St. (212-239-6200).*

Les Misérables—The implacable Inspector Javert hounding the innocent ex-convict Jean Valjean; the pathetic Fantine, wronged by the entire world, dying as she entrusts her daughter, Cosette, to the now-prosperous Mayor Valjean; the dastardly Thénardiers bringing up Cosette as a scullion while cosseting their own daughter, Eponine—what a story! Just synopsizing the plot brings tears to the iciest of eyes. (Simon: 3/31/97.) $20–$80. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened: 3/12/87. *Imperial Theater, 249 W. 45th St. (212-239-6200).*

The Lion King—This spectacle rightfully earns that most abused of epithets: *magical.* (Simon: 12/1/97.) $20–$90. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 1 and 6:30. Opened: 11/13/97. *New Amsterdam Theater, 214 W. 42nd St. (212-307-4747).*

The Man Who Came to Dinner—One of the American theater's funniest farces, this play is much funnier than the same Kaufman and Hart's *You Can't Take It With You,* because it is less good-natured, and amiableness is not what farce is about. The Roundabout Theatre Company has bravely inaugurated its new home, the American Airlines Theatre, with this capital farce, and in Nathan Lane they have found the right man for a risky role. The character is semi-Lane, semi-lion, and the actor nicely adds the bitchy fierceness to his customary campiness. There is not a weak link in the large cast. William Ivey Long's costumes, Paul Gallo's lighting, and especially Tony Walton's set that cunningly mirrors the auditorium's somewhat faded splendor are no less on the mark. (Simon: 8/7/00.) $50–$65. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2. Through 10/1. *American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. (212-719-1300).*

Miss Saigon—A big helicopter stars in this adaptation of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly.* $20–$80. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened: 4/11/91. Through 12/31. *Broadway Theater, 1681 Broadway, at 53rd St. (212-239-6200).*

The Music Man—Back in 1957, Meredith Willson's *The Music Man* made a star out of Robert Preston; the current revival should do the same for Rebecca Luker. As she has steadily demonstrated, she is blessed with the voice, the looks, and the acting talent of a musical-comedy diva. As Marian Paroo, the librarian of River City, Iowa, who goes from tight-lipped spinster to glowing inamorata in this happy show, Miss Luker gives a performance as detailed, nuanced, and cherishable as ever turned a performer into a legend. (Simon: 5/8/00.) $40–$85. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. *Neil Simon Theatre, 250 W. 52nd. St. (212-307-4100).*

The Phantom of the Opera—Eleven leads, eleven years, and roughly 7 million theatergoers later, Andrew Lloyd Webber's blockbuster continues to pack them in. $20–$80. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened: 1/26/88. *Majestic Theater, 247 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).*

Rent—The late Jonathan Larson's reimagining of Puccini's *La Bohème* as it might be lived by a gaggle of contemporary sick and hip types living in the East Village. $35–$80. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 2 and 7. *Nederlander Theater, 208 W. 41st St. (212-307-4100).*

Riverdance—This revamped version returns to New York with a more global feel, featuring flamenco and South African vocals, along with Irish singer Brian Kennedy and dancers Pat Roddy and Eileen Martin. $25–$80. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. *Gershwin Theatre, 222 W. 51st St. (212-307-4100).*

Saturday Night Fever—Flared pants! $35–$85. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 2 and 7. *Minskoff Theatre, 200 W. 45th St. (212-307-4100).*

Swing!—The dance marathon begins, with requisite suspenders and flared skirts, in this new musical. $20–$80. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. *St. James Theatre, 246 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).*

Off Broadway

Previews and Openings

Arabian Nights—The Young Vic Theatre Company presents a kid-friendly performance of fun tales like *Ali Baba & the Forty Thieves.* $10–$25. Thurs.–Sat. at 7, Sat. at 1, Sun. at 12 and 6. 9/29–10/22. *New Victory Theater, 209 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200).*

The Beginning of August—Mary Steenburgen stars in Tom Danaghy's new family drama, the story of a man whose life suddenly becomes very complicated when his wife leaves him with their infant daughter. $35–$40. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 7, Sat. and Sun. at 2. Previews begin 9/26 for a 10/11 opening. *Atlantic Theater, 336 W. 20th St. (212-239-6200).*

The Butterfly Collection—Marian Seldes, Brian Murray, Reed Birney, Betsy Aidem, James Colby, and Maggie Lacey star in a new play about a New England literary family by Theresa Rebeck (*Spike Heels, Loose Knit*). Bartlett Sher (*Waste*) directs. $40. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 7:30, Sat. and Sun. at 3. In previews for a 10/3 opening. *Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. (212-279-4200).*

The Gorey Details—A new musical based on the spooky stories of Edward Gorey, with music by Peter Matz and direction by Daniel Levans. $45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2:30, Sun. at 3 and 7. Previews begin 9/26 for a 10/16 opening. *Century Center, 111 E. 15 St. (212-239-6200).*

The In-Gathering—Inaugurating the newest Off Broadway house, the Duke on 42nd Street Theater, this new musical about an emancipated slave who travels to New Orleans in search of his wife is directed and choreographed by *Jelly's Last Jam* vet Hope Clarke, with music by Daryl Waters (*Bring In 'da Noise/Bring In 'da Funk*) and lyrics by John Henry Redwood (*The Old Settler*). *Duke Theater, 229 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200).*

Juno and the Paycock—Set during the Irish Civil War, Sean O'Casey's 1924 drama tracks a poor family living in a Dublin tenement who are informed of an inheritance and drop cash like Puffy before learning, tragically, that their anticipated fortune is just a pittance. In previews for a 10/19 opening. $55. Tues.–Sat at 7:30, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2:30. *Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. (212-777-4900).*

Lifegame—Hoping that audiences haven't felt reality-based-entertainment fatigue, the first of two Off Broadway shows promises to place pre-selected regular folks onstage. In this improvisational piece by the Improbable Theater, the people responsible for last year's delightfully kid-averse *Shockheaded Peter* will be interviewing practical strangers and acting out scenes from their lives. $25–$37.50. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 5, Sun. at 3 and 7. In previews for a 9/28 opening. *Jane Street Theatre at the Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. (212-239-6200).*

Stranger—Kyra Sedgwick and David Straitharn star in a new play by Craig Lucas about two strangers who meet on a plane, one of whom is a felon. $45. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 5 and 9. Previews begin 9/27 for a 10/17 opening. *Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. (212-353-0303).*

Tallulah Hallelujah!—Is Tallulah Bankead this season's Mae West? Clearly, that's the idea. Last year, two plays about West debuted and Claudia Shear's wonderful *Dirty Blonde* transferred to a healthy Broadway run. Soon, three Off Broadway shows will tackle the legacy of the raunchy brunette. Tovah Feldshuh's up first in her new solo show. $45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. at 2, Sat. at 2:30, and Sun. at 3. In previews for a 10/10 opening. *Douglas Fairbanks Theatre, 432 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200).*

Texts for Nothing—The Classic Stage Co. welcomes back New Vaudevillian Bill Irwin, who delighted New York with his amazing physical antics in *Fool Moon.* He directs and stars in this new production based on Samuel Beckett's short prose. $25–$40. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Previews begin 9/28 for a 10/15 opening. *Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. (212-677-4210).*

Two Small Bodies—A detective and a femme fatale meet in this drama by Neal Bell, directed by Carl Andress. $35. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 3, Sun. at 7. 9/29–10/15. *John Houseman Studio, 450 W. 42nd St. (212-906-1515).*

Now Playing

4 Guys Named José . . . and Una Mujer Named Maria—Four Latino guys fight to put together a song-and-dance revue that confounds stereotypes. $37.50–$47.50. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sun. and Sat. at 3, Sun. at 7:30. *Blue Angel Theatre, 323 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).*

And God Created Great Whales—Rinde Eckert's terrific production about a piano tuner who attempts to compose an opera based on *Moby-Dick.* $35–$45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 4. Through 10/1. *45 Bleecker Theatre, 45 Bleecker St. (212-307-4100).*

Previews
A Suspicious *Stranger*

"I can't really tell you much," says Kyra Sedgwick of the new play *Stranger.* "The only thing I'm supposed to say is that there are two people who meet on a plane, one of whom is a felon." The cagey actress will be starring opposite David Strathairn (pictured, with Sedgwick) in the newest collaboration between playwright Craig Lucas (*Prelude to a Kiss*) and director Mark Brokaw (*How I Learned to Drive*), their first since the 1998 thriller *The Dying Gaul.* Details are scarce: Sedgwick will hint only that the play is "intense" like *Oleanna* and *Medea,* but also "shocking" and therefore "not like *The Music Man* or *Avow.*" Is that clear? Previews begin September 26. (See "Off Broadway.")

Photograph by Carol Rosegg.

Berlin to Broadway with Kurt Weill—A new revue directed by Hal Simons, with musical direction by Eric Stern, who conducted the Kurt Weill celebration at BAM. $45. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 3. *Triad Theatre, 158 W. 72nd St. (212-239-6200).*

Big Cactus—David T. King's new comedy introduces a furniture-maker who becomes embroiled in a revoultionary cause and begins stealing rare cacti. $15. Mon. and Wed.–Sat. at 8. *Curricun Theater, 154 W. 29th St. (212-615-6906).*

Blithe Spirit—Nöel Coward's comedy about death and marriage. $28–$35. Tues. at 7, Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2. Through 10/15. *Pearl Theatre Company, 80 St. Marks Pl. (212-598-9802).*

Blue Man Group: Tubes—Smart silliness, with toilet paper, neon-colored paint, cereal, etc. Wildly inventive, and appropriate for just about everyone—kids, adults, foreigners, haters and lovers of performance art. $45–$55. Tues.–Thurs. at 8, Fri. at 7 and 10, Sat. at 4, 7, and 10, Sun. at 4 and 7. Opened: 11/17/91. *Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. (212-254-4370).*

Coriolanus/Richard II—Ralph Fiennes and Linus Roache arrive in highly praised Almeida Theatre productions, performed in repertory. $25–$75. Call for schedule. Through 10/1. *BAM Harvey Theater, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn (718-636-4100).*

The Countess—Gregory Murphy's costume drama about the love triangle of John Ruskin, his wife, and painter John Everett Millais. $40–$55. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2:30. *Lambs Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. (212-997-1780).*

The Crumple Zone—A new comedy by Buddy Thomas about five men during a holiday weekend. $39–$45. Mon., and Wed.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 3 and 7. Through 10/29. *Rattlestick Theatre, 224 Waverly Pl. (212-206-1515).*

De La Guarda—A show that's part carnival, part rock concert, and almost entirely airborne. Perfect for theatrical thrill-seekers who don't mind breaking a sweat. $37.50–$45. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Fri. at 10:30, Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 7. *Daryl Roth Theatre, 20 Union Square East, at 15th St. (212-239-6200).*

Dinner With Friends—Karen and Gabe, international food writers, are giving a dinner for their friends Beth and Tom, which Tom doesn't attend. It emerges from the heartbroken Beth that her husband has left her for another woman. There is skillful construction here, as well as keen psychological insight. (Simon: 11/22/99.) Winner of the Pulitzer Prize. $30–$65: Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 3, Sun. at 7:30. *Variety Arts Theatre, 110 Third Ave. (212-239-6200).*

Don Juan in Hell—The Irish Rep presents a dramatic reading of the third act from George Bernard Shaw's 1903 *Man and Superman*. Donal Donelly, Celeste Holm, James A. Stephens, and Fritz Weaver star. $30–$35. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 3. Through 10/8. *Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. (212-727-2737).*

The Donkey Show—A fantastic, loose disco-musical adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with even looser morals. Very fun. $39. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Fri. and Sat. at 10:30. *El Flamingo, 547 W. 21st St. (212-307-4100).*

The Fantasticks—The musical perennial that, happily, refuses to go away. $36.50–$39. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 3 and 7, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. Opened: 5/3/60. *Sullivan St. Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St. (212-674-3838).*

Forbidden Broadway 2001: A Spoof Odyssey—Gerard Alessandrini's newest update of his long-running musical spoof poking fun at the assorted absurdities of the Great White Way. Now featuring the disco hit "Stayin' Awake." $49.50. Mon. and Wed.–Sat. at 8:15, Sat at 2:30, Sun. at 3:30 and 7:30. Food and drink available, optional. *Stardust Theatre, Broadway at 51st St. (212-239-6200).*

Fully Committed—For the price of an entrée, Becky Mode serves up all the splendors and miseries of restaurant life prepared to a fare-thee-well. Smartly directed by Nicholas Martin, this play is a day in the life of Sam, the young man and struggling actor who works the reservation phones in a four-star restaurant where table 31 seems to be the ne plus ultra of socio-gastronomic achievement. (Simon: 1/17/00.) Now starring the wonderful Roger Bart, who made his name as Snoopy in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. $45. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 6 and 9, Sun. at 3 and 7. *Cherry Lane Theatre, 38 Commerce St. (212-239-6200).*

Godspell—Lookout, J. C. Superstar, there's another Messiah. $45–$50. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. *Theatre at Saint Peter's Church, 619 Lexington Ave., at 54th St. (212-239-6200).*

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change—They're here. They're straight. Get used to it. It's a daring innovation, perhaps, but this musical revue is about what, in the context of most contemporary musicals, seems an amusingly quaint subject these days—heterosexual love. $49.50–$55. Mon., Tues., Fri., Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2:30, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. *Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. (212-239-6200).*

The Immigrant—Jacqueline Antaramian, Walter Charles, Cass Morgan, and Evan Pappas star in this new musical about a young Russian Jew who deals with everyday life in Texas. $37.50. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 3. Through 10/7. *CAP21 Theater (212-279-4200).*

Imperfect Chemistry—A new musical comedy about genetics and male-pattern baldness with book and lyrics by James Racheff and story and music by Albert M. Tapper. $50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 3 and 7. *Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane (212-307-4100).*

It Ain't Nothin' But the Blues—This Tony-nominated musical about the history of the blues has been scaled down to fit inside the 499-seat B.B. King Blues Club. This new production features three of the original Broadway performers. $50. Mon.–Wed. at 8, Wed. at 2, Sun. at 3 and 7. *B.B. King Blues Club, 243 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200).*

Jerusalem Syndrome—Comedian Mark Maron riffs on his pilgrimages to Israel, Hollywood, and a Philip Morris factory. $25–$30. Wed.–Sat. at 8. *Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. (212-307-4100).*

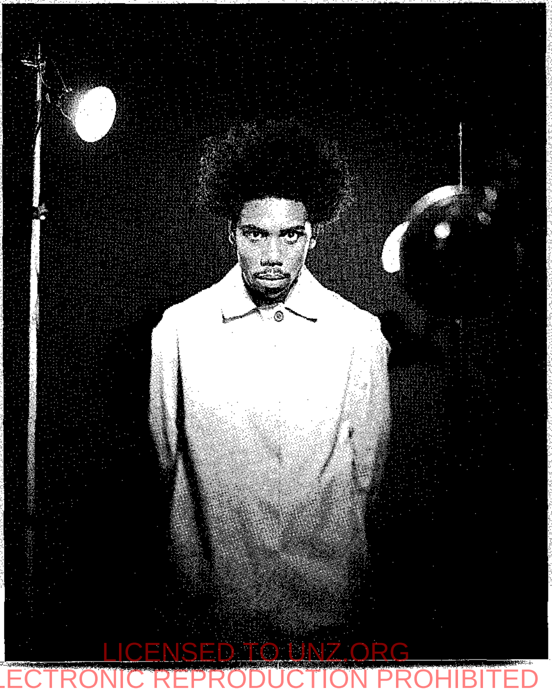
Jitney—This is the revised version of August Wilson's first play, the start of what became a ten-part series, still in progress, about African-American lives, one play per decade. Here the seventies are viewed through the goings-on in the office of a gypsy-cab company in Pittsburgh in 1977. It is so vividly written, acted, and directed (by Marion McClinton, a Wilson specialist) that it keeps you steadily amused, concerned, and moved. All performers are flawless. (Simon: 5/8/00.) $55. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. *Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. (212-505-0700).*

Late Night Catechism—Maripat Donovan as a parochial-school teaching nun backed by a magisterium of unassailable moral authority and some mean wrist action with a ruler. $40. Fri. and Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 3. *St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. (212-239-6200).*

A Lesson Before Dying—See Simon, p. 86. $47.50. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. *Signature Theatre's Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. (212-244-PLAY).*

Onstage
Maximum Exposure

"Taking on the black male figure—it's not new, and it's not supposed to be," explains poet, playwright, and performer Carl Hancock Rux (pictured), his resonant baritone filling the space around him. "It's old as hell, and it's boring. That's the point." Rux, a veteran of the New York spoken-word circuit with a terrific book (*Pagan Operetta*) and a brilliant album (*Rux Revue*) to his credit, conceived his *No Black Male Show* show as a response to the 1994 "Black Male" exhibition at the Whitney Museum. In dance, song, stories, and poetry, Rux excoriates laughably racist sociological studies and a raft of more complex characters, from record producers who "want to dress you in spandex, put a Glock and a blunt in your hand, and stand you under a Philip Morris sign" to poetry-slam judges who "don't know the difference 'tween a sestina and a simile" and artists who "be dreamin' of dying naked in Andy Warhol's arms." But Rux, who's currently workshopping plays at the Public and the Foundry, says he takes it all very personally. His four-person performance, he says, "has always felt like an attack on me." Because as much as Rux skewers pop culture's crude purveyors, the piece builds mostly from his own idiosyncratic and often difficult life: a childhood spent in the foster-care system of the South Bronx, the death of his grandmother, a visit to Africa, and years spent in New York's art world. "I did it in St. Paul, Minnesota, and I threw up afterwards, exhausted," he admits, then chuckles and begins to sing: "'*Nobody's fault but mine*,' the old church song goes. '*If my soul should be lost, it's nobody's fault but mine . . .*'" Performances run for two weekends at Joe's Pub, beginning October 1. (See "Off-Off Broadway.") LOGAN HILL



Photograph courtesy of Music and Arts Management.

Manchild in the Promised Land—A stage adaptation of Claude Brown's classic autobiography, set in fifties Harlem. $35. Mon. and Wed.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. *American Place Theater, 111 W. 46th St. (212-239-6200).*

Murdered by the Mob—Interactive off-line entertainment with a three-course dinner, door prizes, death, dancing, and acting awards for best audience participation. $55. Fri. at 7:30, Sat. at 7. *Arno Ristorante, 141 W. 38th St. (800-687-3374).*

Naked Boys Singing—Just like a musical revue, but without pants. $45–$65. Mon., Wed.–Fri., and Sun. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10, Sat. and Sun. at 3. *Actor's Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. So. (212-239-6200).*

Our Sinatra—Kurt Stamm directs this tribute to Ol' Blue Eyes. $50–$80. Mon.–Wed., Fri. and Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2:30, Sun. at 7:30. *Reprise Room at Dylan's, 245 W. 54th (212-239-6200).*

Perfect Crime—The long-running thriller. $35. Mon. and Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3 and 7. Opened: 4/5/87. *Duffy Theatre, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. (212-695-3401).*

The Soul of an Intruder—Steve Braunstein's play about a woman involved in a perplexing love triangle returns after a successful 1995 run. $20–$30. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. at 2. Through 10/4. *Theatre 3, 311 W. 43rd St. (212-279-4200).*

Stomp—As the title implies, a loud, aggressive, and energetic show in which a troupe of performers dances, claps, and generally bangs on everything in sight. $29.50–$55. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10:30, Sun. at 3 and 7. Opened: 2/27/94. *Orpheum, 126 Second Ave. (212-477-2477).*

The Syringa Tree—Pamela Gien plays 28 characters in a solo show about a young girl who tries to come to terms with life in sixties South Africa. $47.50. Tues.–Sat at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. *Playhouse 91, 316 E. 91st St. (212-307-4100).*

That Ilk—Nancy Dean's new family drama about a lesbian daughter who unearths a surprising family history. $35. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 7, Sat. and Sun. at 2. Through 10/21. *Hudson Guild Theater, 441 W. 26th St. (212-591-0793).*

Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding—A wedding at *St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St.*, then a reception at *Vinnie Black's Coliseum, Hotel Edison, 221 W. 46th St.*, with Italian buffet, champagne, and wedding cake. Wonderfully tacky—and, with more than 4,000 performances, it's lasted longer than a lot of real marriages. Now starring Domenica Cameron-Scorcese, daughter of Martin. $67.50–$80. Thurs.–Sat. at 7, Sun. at 2. Opened: 2/6/88 *(212-239-6200).*

The Vagina Monologues—Eve Ensler's ode to fanny-boos, nappy dugouts, twats, etc., returns for a second coming. What was once Ensler's one-woman show is now performed by trios of actresses. 9/26–10/15: Nell Carter, Kathleen Chalfant, and Annabella Sciorra. $55. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 5, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. *Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. (212-239-6200).*

Where Did Vincent Van Gogh?—Dan Castellaneta, the hilarious comedian responsible for the voice of Homer Simpson and a former cast member of the *Tracy Ullman Show,* performs a one-man, many personalities solo show about an actor whose body is overtaken by aliens while he's doing a solo show about the painter. $35. Tues.–Sun. at 8, Sun. at 4. *Chelsea Playhouse, 125 W. 22nd St. (212-279-4200).*

Where Everything Is Everything—Daisy Eagan stars in Stephen Spoonamore's new romantic drama about a graphic designer, a financial consultant, and sex in the city. $25–$35. Tues.–Sun. at 8. Through 10/14. *Ryan Theater, 128 Chambers St. (212-539-8892).*

Ground Rules:

Except where noted, Broadway shows begin at 8 and are dark Monday. Wallet-watchers should keep in mind the TKTS booths, where discount tickets are available (for that day's performance only) to many Broadway and Off Broadway shows. TKTS booths are at Broadway and 47th St. and 2 World Trade Center, mezzanine level; call 212-768-1818 for more info. Involved in a production and want to submit details for a possible listing? Call 212-508-0740.

Off-Off Broadway

10 Stories Up—Five one-acts on the roof of Greenwich House. $12. Fri. at 6:30, Sat. and Sun. at 6. Through 10/1. *Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. (212-245-4036).*

33 Swoons: A Portrait of Anton Chekhov—Chekhov in the renovated, but hardly reformed, porn palace. Mon.: "Undiscovered Chekhov" and "On the High Road." Tues. and Wed.: "Complete Chekhov Vaudevilles" and "Chekhov Sketchbook." Thurs.: "The Seagull." Fri.: "Vanya on 42nd St." $15–$20. Call for schedule. *Nada Show World Theater, 42nd St. and Eighth Ave. (212-586-7829).*

Baal—This bop-era adaptation, featuring a new translation by Peter Mellencamp, reopens after a successful late-night run earlier this year. $15. Wed.–Sat. at 10, Wed. at 8, Sat. at midnight. Through 11/4. *Flea, 41 White St. (212-226-2407).*

Boonah, Come Down—The U.S. premiere of Tsutomu Mizukami's Buddhist fable, presented by the Japanese Seinenza Theatre Company, features elaborate, colorful masks and costumes. $15–$40. 9/29–10/5 at 7. *Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College, 695 Park Ave., at 68th St. (212-772-4448).*

Boxing 2000—Richard Maxwell's new play follows a family of boxers. $15. Wed.–Sat. at 8. Through 9/30. *Present Company Theatorium, 198 Stanton St. (212-420-8877).*

Chic Band—A comedy about girl bands by Jaene Leonard, featuring performances by several local talents. $5. Mon. at 8. 9/25–10/16. *Baby Jupiter, 170 Orchard St. (212-946-5862).*

The Cradle Will Rock—You've seen the Tim Robbins movie; now see a new production of Mark Blitzstein's lefty 1937 musical onstage. $24–$30. Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 3. Through 10/19. *Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery (212-677-0060).*

Doll—The delightfully absurd Theatre Couture presents *A Doll's House* in the idiom of Ken and Barbie. $15–$20. Wed.–Sun. at 7:30. 9/30–11/10. *P.S. 122, 150 First Ave. (212-477-5288).*

Macbeth—A major hit in a very small way at Fringe, Tiny Ninja Theater presents the Bard's classic, performed entirely by tiny plastic toys. $12. Wed.–Sat. at 7. Through 10/1. *Present Company Artspace, 198 Stanton St. (212-420-8877).*

Mad Hittin'—In Andre Brown's new tap show, a tap master teaches a group of Broadway wannabes. $10. Thurs.–Sun. at 8. Through 10/8. *Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave. (212-254-1109).*

Middle Finger—Two Filipino-American boys make their way through Catholic school in this new play by Han Ong, a recent recipient of the MacArthur "genius grant." Presented by Ma-Yi Theatre Company. $19. Tues.–Sat. at 7, Sat. and Sun. at 2. *Blue Heron Arts Center, 121 E. 24th St. (212-841-0370).*

Natural Born Pop: 20 from the 20th Century—Highlights include Ian W. Hill's fusion of *Apocalypse Now* and *Jungle Book*, titled *Even the Jungle*, Mark Spitz's "The Hobo Got Me High," and the first theatrical Ed Wood festival. $8.88–$14.99. Call for schedule. Through 10/9. *Nada Classic, 167 Ludlow St. (800-965-4827).*

The Personal Equation—To kick off the third year of the Playwrights Theater of New York Eugene O'Neill series, which aims to stage all of O'Neill's works, the theater presents his 1915 drama, written while the playwright was a college student. Free. Mon.–Sat. at 8. *Provincetown Playhouse, 133 MacDougal St. (212-998-5801).*

South of No North—The 29th Street Rep revives its successful spring adaptation of stories by Charles Bukowski. $35. Wed.–Mon. at 8. *29th Street Rep Theatre, 212 W. 29th St. (212-465-0575).*

Wyoming—Marylouise Burke stars with Rosalyn Coleman and Camilla Enders in Catherine Gillet's new play about thee women who escape from a mental institution and go gonzo through the great state of Wyoming. $12. Thurs.–Sun. at 8. *78th Street Theatre Lab, 236 W. 78th St. (212-873-9050).*

Opening
Barbie and . . . Torvald?

Theatre Couture, the downtown company responsible for what may be the only drag adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart," is back. And because any good metaphor can suddenly become frighteningly literal Off-Off Broadway, they're opening 'Doll'—inspired, of course, by Ibsen's 'A Doll's House' and produced in the idiom of Barbie and Ken. Sherry Vine (pictured) and Candis Cayne play an unhappy couple raising two children (designed by puppeteer Basil Twist) on a stage that resembles Barbie's Dream House, circa 1879. Previews begin September 30. (See "Off-Off Broadway.")

Photograph by Aaron Cobbett.

art

Bonnie Cashin...Alan Shields...The Countess

Retrospective
Then and Forever

Modern line: From Cashin's fall 1950 collection.

A pioneer of American sportswear whose work has proved timeless, Bonnie Cashin (1915–2000) is the subject of an exuberant exhibition at the Museum at FIT, on view through January 6. Cashin's clothes were designed, as she put it bluntly, for "women who have something to do." Like the beautiful and humane Scandinavian Modern design that flourished when she was in her heyday, they turn practical virtues into an aesthetic. Simply and exquisitely cut, a Cashin garment moves easily and travels well, serving as a kind of sleekly sculpted envelope with pockets that leaves the wearer's hands free for activities more compelling than toting a purse. (Cashin's purses—*holdalls really—designed for Coach and enjoying* a recent revival, simply echo the handsome serviceability of the clothes.) Cashin served as her own model for the feisty, forward-looking woman on the go. Born in California, she learned about clothes construction from her dressmaker mother. Still in her teens, she migrated to New York, where her talent was co-opted by a ready-to-wear manufacturer after one look at costumes she'd designed for the chorus line of the Roxy Theater. The forties found Cashin back on the West Coast, designing for movies like *Laura* and *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn.* Tiring of Hollywood, she returned to the East Coast and, in 1952, finally set up her own firm. Cashin considered herself an artist, working on her own terms outside the loop of fickle fashion. Aficionados responded in kind, keeping her creations active in their wardrobes not for a season but forever, reluctant to part with them even when they wore out. This despite the fact that, unlike most memorable clothes, Cashin's designs *are in no way seductive. They ignore romantic fantasy and erotic mystery. Their realm is broad* daylight, where, to this day, they're unsurpassed.

TOBI TOBIAS

Photograph courtesy of the Museum at FIT.

Galleries
Solos

Madison Avenue and Vicinity

Charles Belle—Recent paintings from the series "Ex Nihilo Nihil," each of which depicts a single flower; through 10/21. Cadé, 1045 Madison Ave. (212-734-3670).

Dan Flavin—Six fluorescent-light sculptures from the sixties; through 11/4. Zwirner & Wirth, 32 E. 69th St. (212-517-8677).

Charles Goldman—Sculptures explore the artist's identity in relation to the forms and structures of everyday experience, such as a large walkway constructed from wood; through 10/14. Sculpture Center, 167 E. 69th St. (212-879-3500).

Henri Michaux—More than 60 works on paper dating from the forties to the seventies by the French artist and poet (1899–1984) known for his intricately detailed depictions of minute organic shapes and repeating patterns; through 11/25. Werner, 4 E. 77th St. (212-988-1623).

Yoko Ono—*The Four Seasons,* a new mixed-media installation, and photographs from the films *Fly* (1970) and *Bottoms* (1966); through 10/21. Ubu, 16 E. 78th St. (212-794-4444).

Erin Parish —New abstract paintings; through 10/14. Winston Wächter, 39 E. 78th St. (212-327-2526).

Raven Schlossberg—Paintings on printed vinyl that incorporate paper collage and depict surreal scenes of children at play; through 10/7. Graham, 1014 Madison Ave. (212-535-5767).

David Smith—A selection of paintings of nudes made by the artist during the last months of life; through 10/21. Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave. (212-744-2313).

57th Street Area

Will Barnet—A survey of the artist's works on paper from the thirties to the present; through 10/14. De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave. (212-262-5050).

Chuck Close/Franz Gertsch—Early works on paper by both; through 10/28. Bernarducci.Meisel, 37 W. 57th St. (212-593-3757).

Mark di Suvero—Indoor sculptures created between 1962 and 1994; through 10/21. Danese, 41 E. 57th St. (212-223-2227).

Rineke Dijkstra/Giuseppe Penone—Recent photographic portraits of adolescent girls and boys in the Tiergarten Park in Berlin and in another park in Eastern Europe/An installation that was shown earlier this year as part of the "Beauty in Fabula" exhibition at the Palais des Papes in Avignon, France, one part of which features a floor-to-ceiling wall of wire-mesh boxes filled with bronzed bouquets of laurel leaves. Through 10/28. Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. (212-977-7160).

Mary Frank—Recent paintings that depict trees, human figures, owls, shipwrecked boats, chasms in the earth, and other images in a swirling atmosphere; through 10/14. DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave. (212-247-2111).

Micha Klein—Photoworks that depict virtual 3-D environments of human models in frozen poses, fantasy architecture, pills, and radiant light; through 10/28. Boone, 745 Fifth Ave. (212-752-2929).

Andrew Masullo—Recent abstract paintings; through 10/21. Washburn, 20 W. 57th St. (212-397-6780).

Jules Olitski—Abstract paintings from 1999 and 2000; through 10/21. Ameringer Howard, 41 E. 57th St. (212-935-1110).

Gerhard Richter—Abstract paintings, works on paper, and photographs; through 10/21. Mathes, 41 E. 57th St. (212-752-5135).

Bridget Riley—Paintings from 1985 to the present and studies for early paintings by this British artist, whose paintings of the sixties and seventies are currently the subject of a survey at the Dia Center for the Arts (see "Museums"); through 10/21. PaceWildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. (212-431-3292).

Charmion von Wiegand/Blanche Lazzell—Abstract paintings, collages, and works on paper dating from 1945 to 1969 by the American modernist (1898–1983), who drew inspiration from Eastern philosophies and alternative religions/Paintings, drawings, and original woodblocks by an American modernist (1878–1956) who was a leading exponent of the woodblock print. Through 10/28. Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St. (212-247-0082).

Krzysztof Wodiczko—A video projection of interviews with Hiroshima survivors and their children that was initially projected in Hiroshima (in 1999) beneath the A-Bomb Dome, the building that was directly under the bomb that exploded on August 6, 1945; through 10/21. Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. (212-315-0470).

SoHo and TriBeCa

Eric Amouyal—Paintings of colorful biomorphic shapes created by pouring paint on the canvas; through 10/14. Donahue/Sosinski, 560 Broadway (212-226-1111).

Robert Colescott—Recent paintings and works on paper of fluidly rendered figures in narratives that offer a provocative view of racial and sexual stereotyping; through 10/28. Kind, 136 Greene St. (212-925-1200).

Chris Costan—Recent montages inspired by old magazine advertisements, early scientific drawings, indigenous patterns, and images from cartoon manuals; through 11/4. Pelavin, 13 Jay St. (212-925-9424).

Matthew Cusick—Recent paintings; through 10/28. Kent, 67 Prince St. (212-966-4500).

Michael David/Torkil Gudnason—New paintings that depict images of grass and crops in flows of velvety paint/Photographs of silhouettes of botanical forms. Through 10/14. Bridgewater/Lustberg & Blumenfeld, 560 Broadway (212-941-6355).

Nicole Eisenman—New work; through 10/14. Tilton, 49 Greene St. (212-941-1775).

Torben Giehler—Paintings of futuristic landscapes; through 10/21. Koenig, 359 Broadway (212-334-9255).

Bernhard Martin—Three walk-in closets that allow the viewer to experience three different settings: a disco, a beach, and a table-dance; through 10/14. Brownstone, 39 Wooster St. (212-334-3455).

Manuel Neri—New sculptures in marble and bronze and drawings; through 10/21. Cowles, 74 Grand St. (212-925-3500).

David Rabinowitch—Drawings from the sculptor's "Construction of Vision" series; through 11/11. Blum, 99 Wooster St. (212-343-0441).

Børre Saethre—*Module for Mood*, an installation of spatial environments that reference waiting areas, decadent private lounges, and other spaces that encourage voyeurism; through 10/12. Thread Waxing Space, 476 Broadway (212-966-9520).

Geneviève Seillé—Large mixed-media drawings on rough brown paper that depict numbers and writing with repetitive architectural imagery and figurative biomorphic shapes; through 10/21. Ross, 568 Broadway (212-343-2161).

Pia Stadtbäumer—Life-size, cast-porcelain sculptures of two children at play that capture each child frozen in mid-gesture; through 10/21. Kelly, 43 Mercer St. (212-343-2405).

Garner Tullis/Vadim Katznelson—Recent abstract paintings by both; through 10/14. Rosenberg + Kaufman, 115 Wooster St. (212-431-4838).

Uri Tzaig—Recent videos, sculptures, installations, graphic design, artist's books, and a game titled *Trance*, by an Israeli artist living in Tel Aviv; through 10/28. Artists Space, 38 Greene St. (212-226-3970).

Chelsea

Darren Almond—A shipping container transformed into the world's largest LED clock, large-scale drawings of the night sky based on navigational charts, and photographs made by the artist as he accompanied the clock on a ship from London to New York; through 10/21. Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. (212-243-0200).

Suzanne Anker—Sculptures, silk-screen prints, and paintings that explore the semiotics of the genetic code and its conjunction with other language systems; through 10/21. Universal Concepts Unlimited, 507 W. 24th St. (212-727-7575).

Xenobia Bailey/Richard Nielsen—Wall and floor installations created from crotcheted multicolored yarn/Paintings of everyday objects rendered in broad gestural strokes. Through 10/14. Stux, 529 W. 20th St. (212-352-1600).

Matthew Benedict—Figurines inspired by the Tarot and a large-scale painting; through 10/14. Alexander and Bonin, 132 Tenth Ave. (212-367-7474).

Rachel Berwick—Translucent cast-resin models of the extinct Tasmanian tiger based on film footage of the animal from the twenties; through 10/14. Sikkema, 530 W. 22nd St. (212-929-2262).

Tom Burckhardt/Frank Gonzalez—Paintings that mix abstraction, decorative patterns, and landscape/"The After Life," an installation of floor-to-ceiling shelves of obsolete machinery and goods collected by the artist. Through 10/14. Golden, 526 W. 26th St. (212-727-8304).

Jonathan Callan—Books, photographs, small sculptures, and a "dust cement" installation; through 10/14. Klagsbrun, 526 W. 26th St. (212-243-3335).

Richard Cramer—Paintings of cartoonlike figures paired with cibachrome photographs of places the artist has visited over the past twenty years; through 10/14. Caelum, 508–526 W. 26th St. (212-924-4161).

Louise Fishman—Recent abstract paintings; through 10/21. Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. (212-242-7727).

April Gornik—Recent paintings and drawings of landscapes; through 10/14. Thorp, 210 Eleventh Ave. (212-691-6565).

Damien Hirst—New sculptures and paintings, including *Hymn*, a twenty-foot-tall painted bronze anatomical model; through 12/16. Gagosian, 555 W. 24th St. (212-741-1111).

Mark Manders—A sculpture installation that symbolizes the artist's life experiences; through 10/14. Greene Naftali, 526 W. 26th St. (212-463-7770).

Yoshiyuki Miura—A sculpture installation of shards of granite suspended from the gallery's ceiling; through 10/14. Von Lintel & Nusser, 555 W. 25th St. (212-242-0599).

Samuel Mockbee—Drawings and models designed by the architect for his firm, Mockbee Coker, based in Jackson, Miss., and Memphis, Tenn., and for Auburn University's Rural Studio in Hale County, Ala., which he founded (with D. K. Ruth) in 1993 as a way to give undergraduate architecture students the opportunity to design and build as a service to the community; through 10/21. Protetch, 511 W. 22nd St. (212-633-6999).

Stefanie Nagorka—Sculptures composed of cast-concrete blocks and hexagonal units; through 10/14. Debs, 525 W. 26th St. (212-6643-2070).

Alice Neel—Portraits painted by the artist in the eighties, near the end of her life; through 10/14. Miller, 524 W. 26th St. (212-366-4774).

Karim Noureldin—Large-scale drawings; through 10/21. Schoormans, 508 W. 26th St. (212-243-3159).

Alan Shields—Multidimensional, hand-painted paper constructions; through 10/14. At Cooper, 521 W. 21st St. (255-1105), Davies, 23 Commerce St. (212-243-6840), and Dieu Donné Papernill, 433 Broome St. (212-226-0573).

Cynthia Sisson—Paintings that mix abstraction with images of traditionally feminine objects and materials; through 10/14. Audiello, 526 W. 26th St. (212-675-9082).

Path Soong—Paintings and drawings on canvas composed of one or a series of linear calligraphic gestures; through 11/11. Greene, 525 W. 22nd St. (212-462-4123).

Charles Spurrier—Recent assemblages that incorporate colored light bulbs, Mylar, mosaics of broken mirror shards, room-fresheners in the shape of Christmas trees, plastic beads, and other materials; through 10/14. Feigen Contemporary, 535 W. 20th St. (212-929-0500).

Andy Warhol—A selection of prints and unique pieces dating from the sixties through the mid-eighties; through 10/31. Kempner, 501 W. 23rd St. (212-206-6872).

Meg Webster—A large floor sculpture composed of sections of fired clay whose shape mimics an eroded river basin, and an environment of pools, fish, and live vegetation; through 10/14. Cooper, 534 W. 21st St. (212-255-1105).

Rachel Whiteread—Eight mixed-media drawings from 1997 that were done as studies for the artist's Water Tower project; through 10/14. Luhring Augustine, 531 W. 24th St. (212-206-9100).

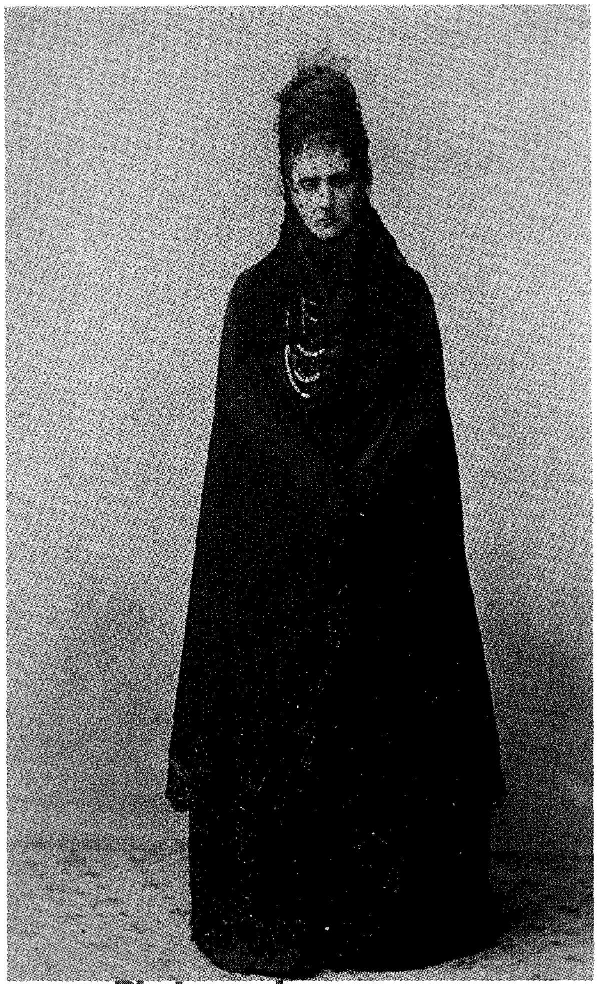
Group Shows

Madison Avenue and Vicinity

China Institute—125 E. 65th St. (212-744-8181). "The Chinese Painter As Poet"; through 12/10. Mon., Wed., Fri., and Sat. 10–5, Tues. and Thurs. 10–8, Sun. 1–5.

Hirschl & Adler—21 E. 70th St. (212-772-7237). "Lazy Days, Hazy Days: Three Centuries of American Summer Retreats"; through 10/25.

Hunter College—Leubsdorf Gallery, 68th St. and Lexington Ave. (212-772-4991). "Building the British Library: An Architectural Exhibition"; through 10/28.



Photograph courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Photography
Strike a Pose

Playing make-believe for the camera started soon after its invention, but few took to the game like the beautiful Countess de Castiglione. Art-directed by the countess and shot by the French photographer Pierre-Louis Pierson, the portraits in "La Divine Comtesse" cover the years 1856 to 1895 (she died, at 62, in 1899) and show our heroine brandishing a dagger and acting mournful (above, 'Rachel,' 1893) but mainly reenacting her favorite social triumphs. At the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1000 Fifth Avenue, at 82nd Street; through December 31.

Martin—23 E. 73rd St. (212-288-2213). Drawings and watercolors by Latin American masters; through 10/6.

Moeller—167 E. 73rd St. (212-988-4500). "Collector's Choice 2000: Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture From the Last Century"; through 10/28.

Stone—113 E. 90th St. (212-987-4997). "Talent 2000," an exhibition of works by emerging artists of various disciplines; through 10/28.

57th Street Area

PaineWebber—1285 Sixth Ave. (212-713-2885), Mon.–Fri. 8–6. "A Genius for Place: American Landscapes of the Country Place Era," an exhibition of contemporary photographs that reveal the sustaining beauty and artistry of early-twentieth-century landscape architecture; through 12/1.

St. Etienne—24 W. 57th St. (212-245-6734). "The Expressionist City," an exhibition of works by Beckmann, Dix, Grosz, Grundig, Heckel, Kirchner, Kollwitz, Mammen, Schiele, others; through 11/4.

SoHo and TriBeCa

Art in General—79 Walker St. (212-219-0473). "Re-Drawing the Line," drawings made on-site that employ nontraditional formats and materials, by Alÿs, Balteo, Cooper, Herrera, Thomson, Tottie, Wegner, White; through 10/28.

Dorsky—379 W. Broadway (212-966-6170). "Simply Complex: Monochrome Paintings from L.A.," works by Hendler, Heywood, Kraal, Rafalko, Thurston, Wayne; through 10/28.

Exit Art—548 Broadway (212-966-7745). "Paradise Now: Picturing the Genetic Revolution," works by 39 artists who are exploring the ways in which breakthroughs in genetic research are changing life as we know it; through 10/28.

Location One—26 Greene St. (212-334-3347). "LIFE, After the Squirrel," installations by Cardiff, Cooley, Rist, Tasset, and others in environments created by the exhibition's curator, Harm Lux; through 10/28.

Sperone Westwater—142 Greene St. (212-431-3685). "Against Nature," paintings by the postwar Italian artists Burri, Fontana, Manzoni; through 10/18.

Chelsea

Rosen—525 W. 24th St. (212-627-6000). Works by Edmier, Swallow, Swenson; through 10/12.

White Box—525 W. 26th St. (212-714-2347). "Critic as Grist," artworks about art critics by Bag, Beckley, Kaplowitz, Levine, Oppenheim, Pruitt, Rosler, Wampler, others; through 10/17.

White Columns—320 W. 13th St. (212-924-4212). "Concerted Compassionism," works addressing homelessness by Büchel, McCallum, Rakowitz; through 10/15.

Other

Mansion—42 St. Marks Place (212-505-7055). "City Projects," works by artists from New York, Paris, and Rotterdam; through 10/14.

Photography

Meghan Boody—Digital photographs of a young girl's psychic odyssey through a deviant subterranean world ruled by frogs and their concubines; through 10/21. Gering, 476 Broome St. (212-226-8195).

Lois Conner—Photographs of China's changing geological and cultural terrain, as well as various images of the lotus plant—floral, abstract, and humorous; through 10/28. Miller, 20 W. 57th St. (212-397-3930).

Pino Dal Gal—Color photographs documenting the daily grind of a chicken slaughterhouse; through 10/28. De Lellis, 47 E. 68th St. (212-327-1482).

John Gossage and Hermann Vogel—Black-and-white silver prints of Washington, D.C., monuments, taken between 1987 and 1993, and albumen prints from an 1868 German archaeological expedition in Egypt—a combination meant to investigate the architectural fortresses constructed by great civilizations for the promotion and preservation of authority; through 10/28. Horowitz, 160a E. 70th St. (212-717-9067).

John Hilliard—Images of staged scenarios inspired by film, television, and advertising—some overtly theatrical, others subtly enigmatic—creating visual ambiguities that question the nature of photographic reality; through 11/4. Senior & Shopmaker, 21 E. 26th St. (212-213-6767).

Peter Hujar—Photographs from 1980 to 1987; through 10/28. Marks, 523 W. 24th St. (212-243-0200).

ICP—1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (212-860-1777), Tues.–Thurs. 10–5, Fri. 10–8 (voluntary contribution 5–8), Sat. and Sun. 12–6; $6, $4 students and seniors. "Martha Rosler: Positions in the Life World." A retrospective of works by the videomaker, theorist, photographer, and political activist, being held in conjunction with a related exhibition at the New Museum of Contemporary Art (see "Museums"); through 10/1.

Michael Kenna—Photographs of nocturnal landscapes and cityscapes; through 10/21. Mann, 210 Eleventh Ave. (212-989-7600).

Mark Kessell—A former doctor and businessman uses daguerreotype, the nineteenth-century photographic process, to create illusions of dimensionality, delving into people's inability to know one another or themselves; through 10/14. Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. (212-627-4819).

Jacques-Henri Lartigue—Vintage prints: from man and machine in motion to elegant women and sun-drenched holidays, all meant, as the artist puts it, to "trap" the very "scent of happiness"; through 11/7. Houk, 745 Fifth Ave. (212-750-7070).

Sheila Metzner—Large-format platinum prints of New York; through 10/21. Stevenson, 338 W. 23rd St. (212-352-0070).

Joel Meyerowitz—Color photographs of street scenes in Paris and New York taken between 1966 and 1976 that have never been published or exhibited; through 10/21. Meyerowitz, 580 Broadway (212-625-3434).

Duane Michaels—Photographic themes of spirituality, fear, and desire from this twentieth-century innovator whose works have included news, fashion, advertising, and the album cover for the Police's *Synchronicity*; through 10/21. School of Visual Arts Museum, 209 E. 23 St. (212-592-2010).

Richard Misrach—New images of the sky that continue the photographer's study of light and color; through 10/14. Marcus, 578 Broadway (212-226-3200).

Robert Polidori—Color photographs of interiors of grand or once-grand buildings in Cuba, Brazil, France, Lebanon, and the United States; through 10/14. Pace/MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (212-759-7999).

Albert Renger-Patzsch—Unique WWII-era images of plant life, landscapes, and architecture by the German photographer, attending to "the beauty of the overlooked"; through 10/28. Tatintsian, 526 W. 26th St. (212-633-0110).

Steve Shapiro—Photographs from the sixties covering political campaigns, the civil-rights movement, hippie protests, and the New York art scene; through 10/14. Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. (212-517-3766).

Robert Stivers—The artist's existential exploration via images of unrecognizable faces, classical sculptures, landscapes, and architectural structures; through 10/14. Throckmorton, 153 E. 61st St. (212-223-1059).

Bert Teunissen—Contemporary, elegiac, and documentary in nature, the photographs defend the "authenticity" of the artist's elderly subjects, whom he considers living relics of a simpler time; through 10/14. Gallery 24, 552 W. 24th St. (212-414-0370).

Chris Verene—Fifty color images from the photographer's lifelong project portraying the community dramas of his family and friends in a small midwestern railroad town; through 10/28. Morris, 465 W. 23rd St. (212-727-2752).

Bettina von Zwehl—Life-size, black-and-white photographs of children aged 2 to 10 that show them completing the task of taking their own portraits in a minimally staged studio set up by the artist; through 10/14. Lombard-Freid, 531 W. 26th St. (212-967-8040).

Neil Winokur—Humorously deadpan photographs of objects meant to symbolize New York: the Empire State Building, the hot dog, the rat; through 10/28. Borden, 560 Broadway (212-431-0166), Tues.-Sat., 11-5.

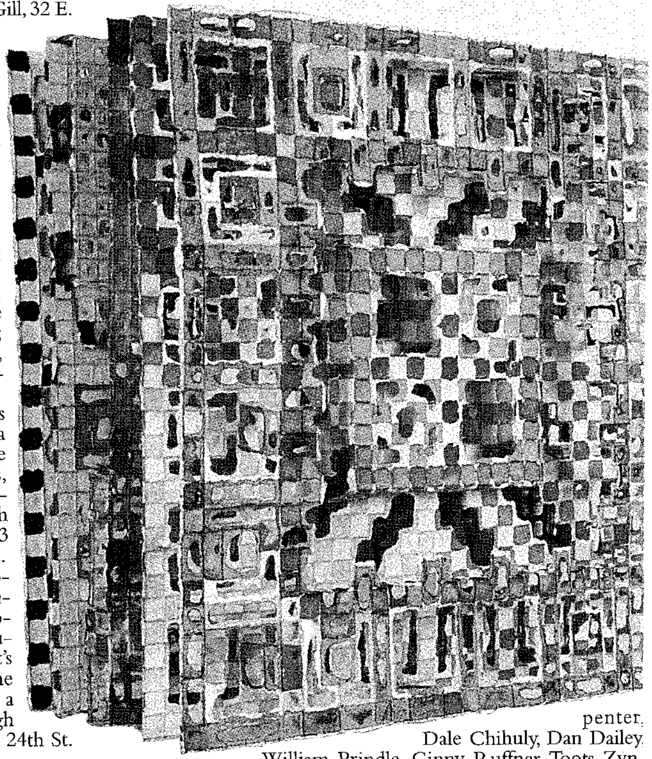
Tom Wood—"The Bus Project, 1976–1996," a series of photographs taken looking into or out from the windows of a bus; through 11/4. Erben, 516 W. 20th St. (212-645-8701).

Frank Yamrus—This artist continues his interest in sexuality with larger-than-life photographs of masturbating subjects in various stages of orgasm—do not underestimate the range of facial expressions; through 10/14. Morthland, 225 Tenth Ave. (212-242-7767).

Museums

American Craft Museum—"Memories of Murano: American Glass Artists in Venice." Glass works made in Venice by Tina Marie Aufiero, James Carpenter, Dale Chihuly, Dan Dailey, William Prindle, Ginny Ruffner, Toots Zynsky, and other American glass artists who have been invited to work in the Venetian glass factory of Paolo Venini; through 1/7/01. . . . "Venetian Glass: 20th Century Italian Glass From the Olnick Spanu Collection." Works by Flavio Poli, Carlos Scarpa, Thomas Stearns, Paolo Venini, and other glass artists from the collection of Nancy Olnick and Giorgio Spanu; through 1/7/01. 40 W. 53rd St. (212-956-3535), Tues., Wed., Fri., Sat., and Sun

Talent **You've got till October 14 to see Alan Shields's recent multilayered paper constructions at Paula Cooper Gallery (521 West 21st Street) and Nicholas Davies Gallery (23 Commerce Street), as well as at Dieu Donné Papermill (433 Broome Street), where Shields made all the pieces. Some are freestanding, others are wall-mounted (below, *Tiger Trap*, 2000) or hanging, and all are hand-painted in the artist's *signature no-holds-barred palette.***



Photograph courtesy of the Paula Cooper Gallery

10–6, Thurs. 10–8 (pay what you wish 6–8); $5, $2.50 students and seniors.

American Museum of Natural History—"Fighting Dinosaurs." Fossils of dinosaurs locked in combat that were recently discovered in the Gobi Desert; through 10/29. Central Park West at 79th St. (212-769-5100); Sun.–Thurs. 10–5:45, Fri. and Sat. 10–8:45; $8 suggested contribution, $6 students and seniors, $4.50 children.

Brooklyn Museum of Art—"Hip-Hop Nation: Roots, Rhymes, and Rage." An exhibition exploring the growth of hip-hop music through music, video, photography, clothing, and ephemera from its earliest stages through the present day, including clothing and accessories from Afrika Bambaataa, Run-DMC, the Beastie Boys, Salt N' Pepa, Tupac Shakur, and Puff Daddy; through 12/31. 200 Eastern Pkwy., Brooklyn (718-638-5000); Wed.–Fri. 10–5, Sat. 11–6 (till 11 P.M. on the first Saturday of every month), Sun. 11–6; $4, $2 students and seniors.

Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution—"The Opulent Eye of Alexander Girard." A retrospective of works by the mid-century American designer and architect (1907–1993); through 3/18. 2 E. 91st St. (212-849-8300), Wed.–Sat. 10–5, Sun. 12–5, Tues. 10–9 (5–9, free admission); $8, $3 students and seniors.

Dahesh Museum of Art—"A Distant Muse: Orientalist Works From the Dahesh Museum of Art." Paintings, sculpture, prints, drawings, photographs, books, and decorative arts by Jean-Léon Gérôme, Charles-Théodore Frère, Ernst Koerner, and other European Orientalists; through 12/30. 601 Fifth Ave., at 49th St. (212-759-0606), Tues.–Sat. 11–6; free.

Dia Center for the Arts—"Bridget Riley: Reconnaissance." The British artist's seminal paintings from the sixties and seventies in which carefully calibrated geometric patterns seem to move rhythmically across a canvas; through 6/17. . . . "Jorge Pardo: Project." A transformation of the Dia Center's 6000-square-foot ground floor featuring colored ceramic tiles, mural paintings, glass dividers, stylish seating, increased natural light, and an expanded bookstore; through 6/17. . . . "Rodney Graham and Bruce Nauman . . . *the nearest faraway place*." New and earlier works by both artists that reflect their shared interests in the myth of the American West; through 6/17. 542 W. 22nd St. (212-989-5566), Wed.–Sun. 12–6; $6, $3 students and seniors.

Drawing Center—"Selections Fall 2000." Works on paper by eight emerging artists who submitted their work to the Drawing Center's curatorial staff for professional feedback and to be considered for inclusion in an exhibition; through 10/7. . . . "Ania Soliman, *Biohazards*." An installation of four large-scale drawings that reflect on media's representation of epidemics; through 10/7. 35 Wooster St. (212-219-2166), Tues.–Fri. 10–6, Sat. 11–6; donation suggested.

Frick Collection—"A Brush With Nature: The Gere Collection of Landscape Oil Sketches." Scenic views of Italy painted by British, French, Italian, German, Belgian, and Scandinavian artists, collected by the art historians Charlotte and John Gere; through 11/12. . . . "Mantegna's *Descent Into Limbo*, From the Barbara Piasecka Johnson Collection." A smaller version of Mantegna's original masterpiece that was probably painted by the artist for Ferdinand Carlo, the last Duke of Mantua, around 1470–75; through 8/1/03. . . . "Six Paintings From the Former Collection of Mr. and Mrs. John Hay Whitney on Loan From the Greentree Foundation." Works by Corot, Degas, Manet, Picasso, Redon; through 7/29/01. 1 E. 70th St. (212-288-0700); Tues.–Sat. 10–6, Sun. 1–6; $7, $5 students and seniors; children under 10 not admitted.

Grey Art Gallery—"Face to Face: Shiseido and the Manufacture of Beauty, 1900–2000." The history of the Japanese cosmetics company as told through its archives of prints, posters, photographs, product designs, advertisements, and works of art; through 10/28. 100 Washington Square East (212-998-6780); Tues., Thurs., Fri. 11–6, Wed. 11–8, Sat. 11–5; $2.50 suggested donation.

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum—"Amazons of the Avant-Garde: Alexandra Exter, Natalia Goncharova, Liubov Popova, Olga Rozanova, Varvara Stepanova, and Nadezhda Udaltsova." Paintings and works on paper by six Russian avante-garde women artists, drawn from more than 30 public and private collections; through 1/7. 1071 Fifth Ave., at 88th St. (212-423-3500); Sun.–Wed. 9–6, Fri. and Sat. 9–8 (Fri. 6–8, pay what you wish), closed Thurs.; $12, $8 students and seniors.

Jewish Museum—"Morocco: Jews and Art in a Muslim Land." Decorative objects, artworks, costumes, and photographs documenting Jewish life in Morocco for the past 2,000 years; through 2/11/01. . . . "Eat, Drink, and Be Merry: Wine and Beer in Ancient Times." The history of the two beverages as told through art, artifacts, and paraphernalia from the wine- and grain-producing regions of the Mediterranean and the Near East; through 11/5. . . . "Moritz Daniel Oppenheim: Scenes From Frankfurt's Jewish Past." Fourteen *grisaille* (monochromes in shades of gray) paintings by the German Jewish artist (1800–1882), from his series "Pictures of Traditional Jewish Family Life"; through 10/19. . . . "Pickles and Pomegranates: Jewish Homes Near and Far." An interactive children's exhibit that evokes life in two late-nineteenth-century Jewish households; through 10/30. 1109 Fifth Ave., at 92nd St. (212-423-3200); Sun., Mon., Wed., Thurs. 11–5:45, Tues. 11–8 (Tues. after 5 pay what you wish); $8, $5.50 students and seniors.

Metropolitan Museum of Art—"Egyptian Art at Eton College: Selections from the Myers Museum." Ancient Egyptian decorative artworks that were acquired by Major William Joseph Myers (1858–1899), an alumnus of the college; through 1/21/01. . . . "Thomas Sully in the Metropolitan." Paintings and drawings by the Philadelphia portraitist (1783–1872) from the museum's collection, including self-portraits, depictions of prominent social figures, members of the artist's family, and other subjects; through 12/31. . . . "Queen Victoria and Thomas Sully." Oil portraits, wash drawings, and graphite sketches made between 1837 and 1838, when the artist was commissioned to paint the young queen; through 12/31. . . . "Art and the Empire City: New York, 1825–1861." Paintings, sculpture, architectural drawings, photographs, and decorative arts created in New York City, from the museum's own collections and from lenders in the United States and Europe; through 1/17/01. . . . "La Divine Comtesse: Photographs of the Countess de Castiglione." Photographs of the Countess de Castiglione, the mistress of Napolean III and considered a great beauty of her day, that were taken by the photographer Pierre-Louis Pierson under her direction; through 12/31. . . . "The Embodied Image: Chinese Calligraphy from the John B. Elliott Collection." Hanging scrolls, handscrolls, album leaves, and letters from the Elliott Collection of The Art Museum, Princeton University, accompanied by a selection of calligraphic works from the Metropolitan's collection; through 1/7/01. . . . "American Modern: 1925–1940—Design for a New Age." More than 100 objects from the museum's collection and from the John C. Waddell Collection, including furniture, clocks, appliances, lamps, posters, and textiles; through 1/9/01. . . . "Painters in Paris: 1895–1950." Paintings by Bonnard, Braque, Chagall, Léger, Matisse, Picasso, and other artists who worked in Paris; through 12/31. 1000 Fifth Ave., at 82nd St. (212-879-5500); Tues.–Thurs. and Sun. 9:30–5:15, Fri. and Sat. 9:30–9; $10 contribution, $5 students and seniors. The Cloisters, Fort Tryon Park (212-923-3700); Tues.–Sun. 9:30–4:45 (closes at 5:15 between April and September); $10, $5 students and seniors.

Morgan Library—"Claude and the Ideal Landscape." Drawings of Italian landscapes by the French artist Claude Lorrain (1600–1682), who spent most of his life in Rome; through 10/29. . . . "Sacred Songs: Illuminated Choir Books." Music manuscripts used in the liturgy of the Catholic Church during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance; through 10/15. 29 E. 36th St. (212-685-0008), Tues.–Thurs. 10:30–5, Fri. 10–8, Sat. 10:30–6, Sun. 12–6; $8, $6 students and seniors.

Museum for African Art—"In the Presence of Spirits: African Art From the National Museum of Ethnology, Lisbon." Artworks from Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea Bissau; 9/27–12/31. Museum for African Art, 593 Broadway (212-966-1313), Tues.–Fri. 10:30–5:30, Sat. and Sun.12–6; $5, $2.50 students, seniors, and children.

Museum of American Folk Art—"An Engagement With Folk Art, Cyril I. Nelson's Gifts to the Museum." Quilts, textiles, coverlets, painted and decorated furniture, paintings, and other works given to the museum by one of its trustees; through 1/7/01. Two Lincoln Square (212-595-9533), Tues.–Sun. 11:30–7:30; free.

Museum of Modern Art—"MOMA 2000: Open Ends." An exhibition comprising approximately twelve separate exhibitions of the museum's acquisitions in all media since 1960, including paintings, sculpture, photography, video, design, and architectural drawings and models; through 1/20/01. . . . "Project 70: Jim Hodges, Beatriz Milhazes, Faith Ringgold." Banners by each artist displayed on the museum's 53rd Street façade; through 10/31. . . . "Collection Highlights." More than 45 masterworks from the museum's permanent collection of painting and sculpture; through 1/28/01. 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480); Sat.–Tues., Thurs. 10:30–5:45, Fri. 10:30–8:15 (4:30–8:15 pay what you wish), closed Wed.; $10, $6.50 students and seniors.

Museum of the City of New York—"Renewing a Block and the Spirit of its People: Photographs of Carmel Hill, Harlem, by Bill Foley; through 11/12. . . . "Under the El." Images of New York City life in prints, watercolors, and drawings from the museum's collection; through 12/3. . . . "New York Now: Contemporary Works in Photography." Images of New York and New Yorkers from the museum's collection; through 10/15. 1220 Fifth Ave., at 103rd St. (212-534-1672), Wed.–Sat. 10–5, Sun. 1–5; $5 suggested contribution, $4 students and seniors.

Museum of the Fashion Institute of Technology—"Bonnie Cashin, Practical Dreamer." An exhibition paying tribute to the American clothing designer through designs, childhood and professional sketches, photographs, film stills, clips, personal scrapbooks, and other ephemera; through 1/6/01. Seventh Ave. at 27th St. (212-217-7642), Tues.–Fri. 12–8, Sat. 10–5; free.

New Museum of Contemporary Art—"Pierre et Gilles." Hand-painted photographs from the past two decades by the French collaborative team; through 1/7/01. . . . "Martha Rosler: Positions in the Life World." A retrospective of the artist's videos, installations, and photographs; through 10/8. 583 Broadway (212-219-1222), Wed. and Sun. 12–6, Thurs.–Sat. 12–8 (free Thurs. 6–8); $6, $3 artists, students, and seniors.

New-York Historical Society—"Inventing the Skyline: The Architecture of Cass Gilbert." Sketches, presentation drawings, letters, and other materials from the society's Cass Gilbert Collection, relating to such projects as the U.S. Customs House and the Woolworth Building; through 1/21/01. . . . "Jenny Lind: The Swedish Nightingale in America." Documents, portraits, medals, and ephemera from the society's collection relating to the celebrated nineteenth-century singer; through 10/29. . . . "Stork Club." An exhibition tracing the history of New York's legendary nightclub through letters and business records, photographs, menus, and accessories bearing the nightclub's logo; through 10/1. 2 W. 77th St. (212-873-3400); Tues.–Sun. 11–5; $5, $3 seniors and children.

P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center—"John Wesley." The first U.S. retrospective of works by this painter known for his palette of pinks and baby blues, his use of painted "frames" within his pictures, and his daydreamlike combinations of emblems, historical and comic-book figures, animals, and sexy women; through 1/15/01. . . . "Santiago Sierra." A sculpture and performance work by a Mexico-based artist; through 1/15/01. . . . "Around 1984: A Look at Art in the Eighties." Works by a selected group of artists who were practicing in the eighties, among them Basquiat, Bickerton, Clemente, Cragg, Calle, Halley, Holzer, Kapoor, Koons, Salle, Schnabel, Steinbach, Sherman; through 9/30. . . . "Volume: Bed of Sound."

Ground Rules:

Galleries are generally open Tues. through Sat., from between 10 and 11 to between 5 and 6.

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Works by approximately 80 sound artists presented through headphones and a room designed with speakers for individual and group sound-art presentation; through 9/30. . . . Projects by Jonathan Bepler, Christian Marclay, Pipilotti Rist, and Ugo Rondinone; through 9/30. . . . "Max Neuhaus: Drawings." Drawings that complement the artist's sound works; through 9/30. 22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084), Wed.–Sun. 12–6; $5 suggested donation.

Queens Museum of Art—"Art at Work: Forty Years of the Chase Manhattan Collection." More than 120 contemporary artworks from the bank's collection, by Acconci, Barney, Clemente, Close, Gober, Nauman, Prince, Sherman, Wegman, others; through 10/1. New York City Building, Flushing Meadows Corona Park, Queens (718-592-9700), Tues.–Fri. 10–5, Sat. and Sun. 12–5; $4, $2 students and seniors.

Studio Museum in Harlem—"*To Conserve a Legacy* Interactive Kiosk." A digital exhibition featuring images of and information on works in the traveling exhibition "To Conserve a Legacy: American Art From Historically Black Colleges and Universities," which is currently installed at the Clark Atlanta University Art Gallery and the High Museum of Art in Atlanta; through 10/6. 144 W. 125th St. (212-864-4500), Wed. and Thurs. 12–6, Fri. 12–8, Sat. and Sun. 12–6; $5, $3 students and seniors.

Whitney Museum of American Art—"Roni Horn: Still Water (The River Thames, for Example." A piece comprising fifteen photographic images, printed as lithographs, of the surface of the River Thames; through 1/14/01. . . . "Barbara Kruger." The first major museum retrospective of the artist's work, including billboards, photographic prints on paper and vinyl, etched metal plates, installations, and sculptures that use text and image to raise questions about values, taste, and the material world; through 10/22. . . . "Synapsis Shuffle." A project by Robert Rauschenberg that comprises 52 silkscreened paintings intended to be reassembled into compositions of between three and seven panels by longtime friends or colleagues of the artist; through 10/8. . . . "Tony Oursler: *The Darkest Color Infinitely Amplified.*" A new work commissioned by the museum that allows three-dimensional projections to appear in free space; through 10/31. . . . "In Depth: Recent Print Acquisitions." Prints by Burgoyne Diller, Donald Judd, Louise Nevelson, and Richard Tuttle; through 11/26. 945 Madison Ave., at 75th St. (212-570-3676); Tues., Wed., Thurs., Sat., Sun. 11–6, Fri 1–9 (pay what you wish every Fri. 6–9); $10, $8 students, seniors, and groups of fifteen or more.

Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris—"Pastoral Pop!" Site-specific commissioned works by Katrin Asbury, Rob de Mar, Rachel Feinstein, Peter Gould, Jason Middelbrook, Lisa Ruyter, and Alyson Shotz; through 12/15. . . . "Expanding Horizons: Landscape Photographs From the Whitney Museum of American Art." Works by Gregory Crewdson, Sally Gall, Sally Mann, Richard Misrach, Stephen Shore, and others; through 10/6. 120 Park Ave. (917-663-2550), Mon.–Fri. 11–6 (Thurs. till 7:30); free.

Auctions

Christie's—20 Rockefeller Plaza (212-636-2000). 9/27 at 10 and 2: "French and Continental Furniture." On view from 9/23. 10/3 at 10 and 2: "Spink: Coins." On view from 9/30.

Christie's East—219 E. 67th St. (212-606-0430). 10/3 at 10 and 2: "American Furniture and Decorative Arts." On view from 9/30.

Doyle—175 E. 87th St. (212-427-2730). 9/27 at 10: "Belle Époque: Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Decorative Arts." On view from 9/23. 9/27 at 7: "The Cagney Auction." On view from 9/23.

Sotheby's—1334 York Ave., at 72nd St. (212-606-7000). 9/27 at 10:15 and 2: "Rugs and Carpets." On view from 9/21.

Swann Galleries—104 E. 25th St. (212-254-4710). 9/28 at 10:30: "Art & Architecture Books." On view from 9/23.

restaurants

Sidewalk Supper...Baby Food...Sandro's

Manhattan

Lower New York

Bari—Downstairs, this perpetually bustling café attracts SoHo shoppers taking time out for cappuccino, sandwiches, and a view of the always entertaining street scene. Ascend the spiral staircase for a more substantial meal in the loftlike dining room, which features a woodburning oven and grill and dishes like spice-rubbed duck breast with bok choy, crispy roasted halibut, and broiled asparagus with browned Parmesan and bread crumbs. *529 Broadway, at Spring St. (212-431-4350). (M) AE, MC, TM, V.*

Chanterelle—Spare and elegant, virtually religious, this TriBeCa restaurant is a favorite among those who want a Big Deal. Chef David Waltuck runs a grand kitchen—seafood sausage, cold fruit soups, and anything he does with truffles in season. Wife Karen runs the front room with class and warmth. *2 Harrison St., at Hudson St. (212-966-6960). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Divine Bar—The jewel-toned Financial District branch of the popular Turtle Bay bar and lounge serves the same extensive selection of wine and beer, and a similar menu of appetizer-size plates they call "international tapas." Typically creative selections include a barbecued-buffalo sandwich, shrimp satay with hoisin sauce, and a wild-mushroom quesadilla. *55 Liberty St., second fl. (212-791-WINE). (I) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Ecco—Old-world charm, an excellent seasonal antipasto, and classic renditions of such Italian standards as pasta, veal chop, lobster fra diavolo, and osso buco. Very cozy narrow booths line the east wall, and tile floors take you back to the Gilded Age. Live piano music on Friday and Saturday night. *124 Chambers St. (212-227-7074). (M) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

The Greatest Bar on Earth—This, the most casual component of the Windows on the World complex, has become a popular meeting spot for downtown office workers, curious club kids, and the inevitable tourists. The view, obviously, can't be beat, and the snacky menu includes global bites like fried calamari, barbecued ribs, and sushi. Live music Tuesday through Saturday. *1 World Trade Center, 107th floor (212-524-7000). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Gubbio—Decorated with imported tapestries and pottery meant to evoke a medieval Umbrian hill town, this spacious TriBeCa restaurant features a seasonal Italian menu that strives to avoid culinary clichés. Choices include pork medallions with stewed cabbage and smoked ricotta, and lamb carpaccio with olive pesto. *223 W. Broadway (212-334-8077). (M–E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Hudson River Club—From this Frank Lloyd Wright-ish dining room in the World Financial Center, you can see the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. But your attention may very well be diverted by the eye-catching American food—seafood sausage with stewed white beans, potato-and-truffle ravioli with saffron cream, seared yellowfin tuna with caramelized foie gras—right in front of you. *4 World Financial Ctr. (212-786-1500). (M–E) AE, CB, DC, MC, TM, V.*

Layla—A Middle Eastern feast, complete with gyrating belly dancer, brought to you by Drew Nieporent and his TriBeCa production team. Menu highlights include crabmeat phyllo, cinnamon-braised lamb shank with okra, and toasted couscous and almond ice milk. *211 W. Broadway, at Franklin St. (212-431-0700). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Montrachet—No matter how many more restaurants the indefatigable Drew Nieporent has up his sleeve, this one's his baby—attractive, lively, and one of the first truly great restaurants in lower Manhattan. There's lunch on Fridays—try the Roquefort-and-pear salad—and dinner Monday through Saturday. The wine list is killer. *239 W. Broadway, nr. White St. (212-219-2777). (E) AE only.*

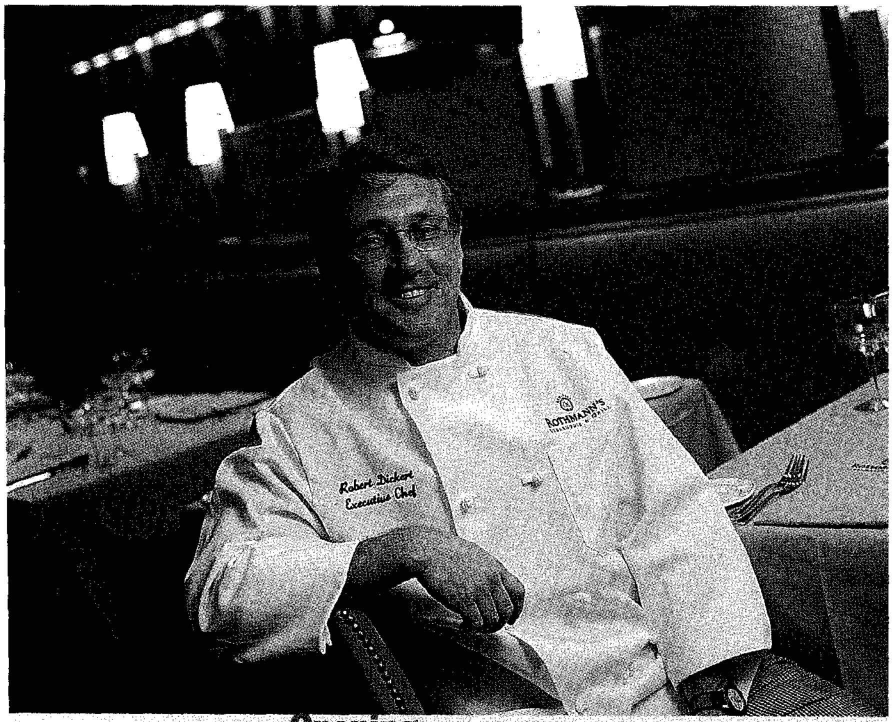
Morton's of Chicago—The second New York location of the national steakhouse chain. Portions are huge, quality is consistent, and, in case you haven't noticed, beef is back. *90 West St. (212-732-5665). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Nobu—The great Nobu Matsuhisa—actually, he's young, good-looking, and incredibly hip—has conquered TriBeCa. It's still virtually impossible to get a reservation, but the intrepid hordes can wait for a table to open up two doors down at Next Door Nobu. *105 Hudson St. (212-219-0500). (E) AE, MC, V.*

Penang—This Malaysian mini-dynasty began in Queens and has sprouted multiple Manhattan locations. Sample such exotic offerings as roti canai, beef rendang, and sarang burung in environs that strive to evoke the tropics. *109 Spring St. (212-274-8883). (M–E) AE, MC, V.*

Scalini Fedeli—This Manhattan branch of a spectacularly popular and critically acclaimed Italian restaurant in New Jersey occupies the old Bouley space, distinguished by high ceiling arches, antiques, and fresh floral arrangements. Dishes like slow-roasted salmon with chanterelles and pan-seared duck breast and leg confit with Calvados and braised figs, both available on the $60 prix fixe, are equally elegant. *165 Duane St. (212-528-0400). (E) AE, MC, V.*

Spring Street Natural—Before SoHo was *SoHo*—and aeons before anyone even conceived of NoLIta—this health-food hub was turning out mostly organic, life-sustaining fare, very similar to its present menu of grilled fresh fish, free-range poultry, and soy every which way. As befits a natural-food haven, there's lots of greenery, big windows, high



Opening
Cow Town

Native New York steakhouses have it tough. Not only must they compete with megachain interlopers like Morton's of Chicago, Ruth's Chris, and Del Frisco's—now they've got to cope with suburbanite incursions. The latest, Rothmann's Steakhouse & Grill, is a collaboration between the owner of Long Island's thriving Chas. Rothmann's and Sbarro, the pizza-fueled fast-food empire. Chef Robert Dickert (pictured), an alumnus of Bobby Van's and Roslyn's Bryant & Cooper, might have a genetically predisposed way with filet—his grandmother was Peter Luger's niece—and he carries on the family tradition with a $132 porterhouse for four. (3 East 54th Street; 212-319-5500.)

hotograph by Bruce Katz.

ceilings, and a generally wholesome vibe. Plus delivery, and such intriguing daily specials as yuca fritters with jalapeño-tomato relish, roasted salmon with creamy vegetable risotto, and scrambled tofu with brown rice. *62 Spring St. (212-966-0290). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Tribeca Grill—Though this spacious, brick-walled restaurant sometimes serves as canteen for the film execs (and movie stars) in offices upstairs, the creative American cuisine and lively bar scene make it a popular downtown destination. Known for its roasted meats and fish specials. *375 Greenwich St., at Franklin St. (212-941-3900). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Wild Blue—In an intimate room that's warm and plushly comfortable but doesn't try to compete with the famous view, chef Michael Lomonaco's menu is solid, superlative American, with a touch of the steakhouse. Exceedingly moist chicken gets a Med-rim treatment with olives and preserved lemons, and buttermilk fried oysters with chipotle cream and spoon bread are an inspired take on an American classic. *1 World Trade Center, 107th floor (212-524-7107). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Windows on the World—Chef and TV personality Michael Lomonaco supervises the kitchens of this landmark restaurant known for what may be the most spectacular view of Manhattan Island. His menu focuses on sophisticated renditions of American food, including stout-braised Black Angus short ribs with Maytag blue cheese, and lobster potpie with truffle cream, spinach leaves, and a chive biscuit. Be sure to take advantage of the restaurant's 60,000-bottle wine cellar. *1 World Trade Center, 107th floor (212-524-7000). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Below 14th Street, East

Gotham Bar & Grill—Alfred Portale's kitchen, with its architectural ingenuity and whimsical creativity, serves as a finishing school for the city's all-star chefs before they launch their own careers. This awesome dining temple has long been a staple. *12 E. 12th St. (212-620-4020). (M) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Osso Buco—Popular Italian restaurant on a much-traveled Village corridor serving family-style portions of the eponymous house specialty, Caesar salad, fried calamari, and T-bone steak. *88 University Pl., nr. 11th St. (212-645-4525). Also, 1662 Third Ave., at 93rd St. (426-5422). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

RBG—During the day, this East Village chameleon satisfies the local appetite for coffee-shop fare with burgers, sandwiches, and salads. At night, happy hour kicks off a mellower mood: the lights go down, the D.J. starts spinning, and the menu extends to more elaborate dishes like apricot-walnut-stuffed pork chop and cilantro-lime chicken breast with roasted-corn salsa. *37 Third Ave. (212-777-2216). (I–M) AE, MC, V.*

Telephone Bar & Grill—This East Village fixture was serving classic pub grub like shepherd's pie and fish and chips long before anyone thought of British comfort food as trendy. A youngish crowd gathers here for happy hour (Mondays through Fridays, 4 to 7p.m.) and for a typically hearty Irish breakfast on weekends. *149 Second Ave. (212-529-5000). (I–M) AE, MC, V.*

Below 14th Street, West

Gus' Place—This welcoming Greek taverna in the West Village offers authentic Mediterranean meze and entrées; French doors open out onto warm evenings. The orzo with Gulf shrimp and the lamb-shank stifado are house specialties. *149 Waverly Pl. (212-645-8511). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, TM, V.*

Jekyll & Hyde—Can you guess the theme of this boisterous Village restaurant? Billing itself as a "haunted explorers' club," it offers interactive entertainment, special effects, and—so that famished explorers may keep up their strength—a menu of American fare like grilled tuna steak, pumpkin tortelli in sun-dried-tomato cream sauce, and "voodoo-spiced" Cajun steak. *91 Seventh Ave. S. (212-989-7701). (I–M) AE, MC, V.*

Osteria Fiorentina—Live piano and violin music lend this casual Italian restaurant that old-time Village ambience. The menu offers standards like risotti, open ravioli, zuppa di clams, and veal chops. *281 Bleecker St. (212-633-2941). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Villa Mosconi—Peter Mosconi and his brood offer a menu as reliable as traditional Northern Italian home cooking. Find this old-world anachronism in the heart of Greenwich Village. A year-round backyard garden is available for private parties. *69 Macdougal St. (212-673-0390). (M) AE, DS, MC, V.*

14th–42nd Streets, East Side

Alva—Bare lightbulbs evoke Thomas Edison, the namesake of this sleek spot owned by Aureole chef Charlie Palmer, but Josh Capon's food is all very twentieth-century: potato-wrapped cod with citrus glaze, charred sirloin with red-onion marmalade, foie gras parfait with roasted apple chutney. *36 E. 22nd St. (212-228-4399). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Bambou—There's a hint of the tropics on East 14th Street: ambitiously nouvelle renderings of Caribbean cuisine, like crab cakes with avocado and molasses or eggplant soup with coconut and curry. The relaxing, palm-fronded dining room and bar attract the expected boldface names and beautiful faces. *243 E. 14th St. (212-358-0012). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Bolo—There's nothing discreet about Bobby Flay's neo-Spanish cooking. In a room that reminds you of Gaudí by way of Pee-wee Herman, Flay turns out fiery, bold dishes like oven-roasted mushrooms with goat cheese and chili oil as well as paella with curried shellfish and chicken. *23 E. 22nd St. (212-228-2200). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Campagna—The *Letterman* crowd is at one table, Time Warner honchos are at another, and isn't that . . . ? Despite the frenzy of having become Media Central, this smart little trattoria serves some of the most satisfying Italian food in Manhattan. Chef Mark Straussman is to thank for dishes like rabbit in polenta, gnocchi with wild mushrooms and truffle oil, and grilled tuna with beets. *24 E. 21st St. (212-460-0900). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Commodore Grill at the Grand Hyatt Hotel—Commuters and business travelers will be glad to know they can enter this formal hotel restaurant directly from Grand Central Terminal, whether for a quick drink in the cigar bar or a full meal of such French-influenced American fare as foie gras French toast, tuna tartare, and ribeye of veal with Swiss chard. *42nd St. and Lexington Ave. (212-850-5999). (M–E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Frere Jacques—For six years, chef Pascal Bettig and his brother Jacques kept a grateful Bay Ridge clientele well fed with escargots, onion soup, and steak au poivre. They've brought those classics and added a few updates to this casual restaurant on the former Murray Hill premises of Le Grenadin. *13 E. 37th St. (212-679-9355). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Gramercy Tavern—As a second act to Danny Meyer's much-loved Union Square Cafe, this Flatiron American standout doesn't disappoint. The main dining room manages to be both impressive and cozy, the service superlative, and Tom Colicchio's food inspired. For lesser appetites and lower budgets, the bar menu in the Tavern Room is equally delicious. Orchestrate your own cheese course and sample the varied selection of wines by the glass. *42 E. 20th St. (212-477-0777). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Heartland Brewery—A rollicking brewpub with a lively outdoor café and a menu as American as its Thomas Hart Benton–ish murals. Accompany your choice of microbrew with comfort food like meat loaf with buttermilk smashed potatoes, stout-glazed chicken with apricots and juniper berries, and—for adventurers—buffalo burgers. The beer-weary can sample from the city's largest selection of tequilas and single-malt scotches. *35 Union Square W. (212-645-3400). (I) AE, DC, MC, TM, V.*

Meli Melo—A pioneer of the lower-Madison restaurant scene, this cheerful neighborhood spot offers a very reasonable fixed-price dinner—$31.50 for four courses, all night (including Sunday). The seafood-heavy French menu has Asian and Mediterranean touches in dishes like seared tuna with baby bok choy, rack of lamb with couscous, and a Vietnamese fish soup. And there's a private party room and ample parking. *110 Madison Ave., nr. 29th St. (212-686-5551). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Photograph by Carina Salvi

Takeout

Guac and Roll

The next time you've got a yen for L-Ray's creamy guacamole or a Cuban reuben, you needn't jostle your way through the rambunctious bar crowd to snag a table. Now you can head around the corner to Baby L-Ray, a new takeout satellite equipped with a fifteen-foot tin ceiling, white subway tile, and a counter edged with multihued croquet balls. A rotating selection of soups and specials like andouille-sausage quesadillas and seviche add variety to regular menu items like duck-confit tacos and shrimp and oyster po' boys. (434 Sixth Avenue; 212-505-9494.)

Mesa Grill—Chef Bobby Flay believes in big flavors and big portions. He developed his own signature style, plundering the ingredients of the American Southwest for such mouthwatering creations as roasted-garlic shrimp tamales and ancho-honey-glazed salmon. Loud, stylish, and loads of fun, especially for those partaking of the house drink, a cactus-pear margarita. *102 Fifth Ave., nr. 16th St. (212-807-7400). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Metro Fish—Hearty fish dinners with all the fixin's in a "nautical townhouse" setting. Live lobsters, crabs, and other fresh seafood platters are simple, satisfying, and reminiscent of the sort of shore dinners served in seaside towns along the Northeast coast. Those with more of a culinary wanderlust can sample the house-special bouillabaisse. *8 E. 36th St. (212-683-6444). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Metronome—This 10,000-square-foot Flatiron space is especially well suited to private functions, but even the lone diner (or foursome) will find the Deco design welcoming and the food—riffs on a Mediterranean theme like "pinchos" of vegetables with goat cheese, and za'atar-crusted rack of lamb, prosciutto, and Brie over herb risotto—satisfying. Live jazz performed Wednesday through Saturday. *915 Broadway, at 21st St. (212-505-7400). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, TM, V.*

Mi—A talented team of cooks with impressive-sounding résumés (Mercer Kitchen, Hatsuhana) collaborate on a menu including sushi and sashimi, pad Thai, Malaysian spare ribs, and Korean bibimbob at this four-flavor pan-Asian restaurant. *66 Madison Ave., nr. 27th St. (212-252-8888). (M–E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Novitá—A beautiful Flatiron restaurant with upscale, nouvelle Italian. Try, especially, the handmade pastas, which seem to have only beneficial effects on all the fashion types and Elite models who've made this room their home away from home. *102 E. 22nd St. (212-677-2222). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

The Pump Energy Food—There simply isn't any way to cheat at this "Physical Fitness Restaurant" and takeout shop. The falafel is baked, not fried; the tuna is low-sodium; and all the egg dishes are whites-only. In fact there's no fried food at all, no oil period, not even a soda in the house. *113 E. 31st St. (212-213-5733). Also, 40 W. 55th St. (246-6844). (I) AE, MC, V.*

Rossini's—This elegant split-level restaurant offers Northern Italian cuisine and live music nightly. Chef Gilberto specializes in seafood, and private parties are easily accommodated. *108 E. 38th St. (212-683-0135). (E) AE, DC, MC, TM, V.*

ivoli Bar and Grill—This midtown restaurant aspires to attract a hip, young crowd. Thus, live music on Thursday night, a D.J. on Saturdays, and a menu heavy on seafood like raw shellfish, fish and chips, and lobster ravioli in seafood broth. There's also a happy hour, with all its attendant grub: chicken wings, mozzarella sticks, nachos, and a complimentary appetizer of the day. *515 Third Ave., nr. 34th St. (212-532-3300). (I–M) AE, MC, V.*

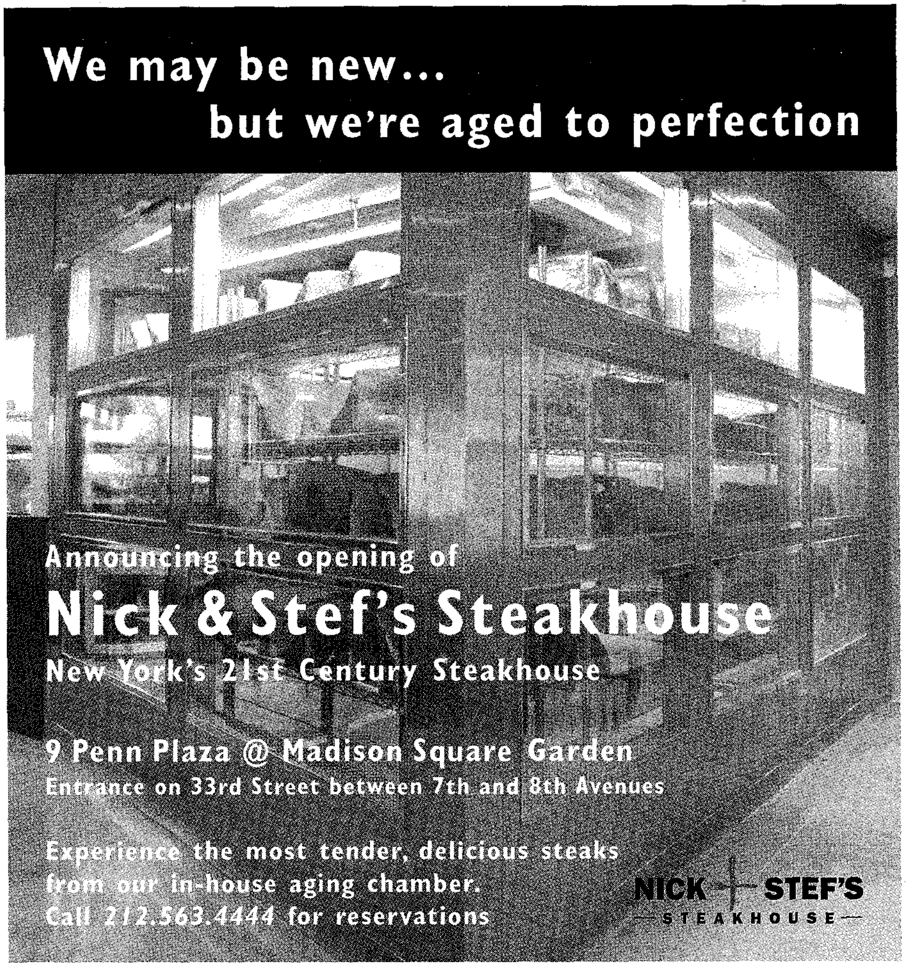
nion Square Cafe—The careful service, human-scale dining rooms, and peerless California café cuisine make this one of the best restaurants in the city. *21 E. 16th St. (212-243-4020). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Verbena—Diane Forley's seasonal American cuisine is at once delicate and deliciously satisfying; the room, similarly, pulls off the neat trick of feeling

Ground Rules:

Here lie a few hundred of the city's more noteworthy restaurants, some *New York* advertisers among them. The price guide, admittedly imperfect, is as follows: (E) = expensive, $35 and over per place; (M) = moderate, $15–$30 per place; (I) = inexpensive, $15 and under per place.

Following each listing there is also a code indicating acceptable methods of payment: ($) = cash only, AE = American Express, CB = Carte Blanche, DC = Diners Club, DS = Discover, M = MasterCard, TM = Transmedia, V = Visa. "AE only" indicates that American Express is the only accepted charge/credit card.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luxurious and minimalist at the same time. The menu is whimsically divided into two categories—fruits and vegetables, and fish, birds, and meats—with such appealing entries as butternut squash ravioli with roasted orange sauce, and rack of lamb with Yorkshire pudding. In summer, demand a garden table. *54 Irving Pl. (212-260-5454). (M–E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

14th–42nd Streets, West Side

Applebee's Neighborhood Grill & Bar—This national chain invades Manhattan's freshly scrubbed and reinvented 42nd Street with an eager-to-please, affordable menu heavy on burgers, steak, and fajitas. Out-of-towners will feel right at home. *234 W. 42nd St. (212-391-7414). (I–M) AE, MC, V.*

Chelsea Bistro & Bar—This friendly bistro became a neighborhood hangout virtually the day it opened. Try the delicious hanger steak and lamb shank, and experiment among the 200-odd wines on the well-chosen list. *358 W. 23rd St. (212-727-2026). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Da Umberto—Low-key Chelsea façade belies the extraordinary Italian offerings inside. Getting a table is no small task, especially in the evening. This is a Euro–New York crossroads. A mad cacophony of laughter and chatter in Brooklynese and Roman. Don't dress down. *107 W. 17th St. (212-989-0303). (E) AE only.*

Fusion@Ohm—One of the new crop of all-in-one entertainment centers: dinner, dancing, and the ever-popular lounging on velvet furniture. Plus an international fusion menu that features Vietnamese vegetable spring rolls, rigatoni bolognese, and pistachio-crusted chicken breast with morel sauce. *16 W. 22nd St. (212-229-2000). (M–E) AE, MC, V.*

Hush—This Flatiron venture is part bar, part nightclub, part restaurant. If you find that last part the most interesting, you'll appreciate the New American menu, served in shareable portions. *17 W. 19th St. (212-989-4874). (I–M) AE, MC, V.*

Le Madri—This Chelsea mainstay has long enjoyed a reputation for informality and flavorful Italian fare. The garden is a wonderful warm-weather spot for a light lunch of salad and pasta or a more substantial repast like osso buco with gremolata or risotto with lemon and zucchini. *168 W. 18th St. (212-727-8022). (M) AE, DC, MC, TM, V.*

World Yacht Dining Cruises—Take an out-of-town visitor to see the sights—all of them—and sup on a selection from the "Best of New York" menu: a collaboration with some of the city's biggest culinary talents, featuring dishes based on recipes from the Sea Grill's Ed Brown, Aquavit's Marcus Samuelsson, and Montrachet's Remi Lauvand and dessert creations from Payard Pâtisserie, all prepared by World Yacht's executive chef Wayne Tuman. Jacket required. Reserve. *Pier 81, W. 41st St. and the Hudson River (212-630-8100). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

43rd–56th Streets, East Side

Café Centro—A big, shiny brasserie-cum-café in the lobby of the MetLife Building; there's inventive cooking going on here, and the joint is as fun and good as non-expensive midtown gets. In the loud little Beer Bar, get one of the best hamburgers in town. Closed Sunday. *200 Park Ave., at 45th St. (212-818-1222). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Cucina & Co.—This market-style takeout shop and café is ideally situated in the lobby of the MetLife Building to catch the crush of commuters passing through Grand Central. Breakfast pastries, specialty sandwiches, baked pastas, steak-frites, and "Dinners for Two" keep the worker bees fueled throughout the day. *200 Park Ave., at 45th St. (212-682-2700). (I) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Della Femina—Jerry Della Femina tapped Kevin Penner, the very talented chef from the adman's Hamptons hot spot, to supervise the stoves at his Manhattan outpost. His city food places the same premium on high-quality ingredients in dishes like day-boat halibut, langoustines with black truffles, and rib-eye steak. Sit at the bar, converse with the able and accommodating bartender, and try to guess the identity of every A- and B-list celebrity in the collage of caricatures. *131 E. 54th St. (212-752-0111). (M–E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Divine Bar—This East Side establishment is all things to all people: a cigar bar, a wine bar, a tapas lounge, and a casual, couch-filled living room where local office workers can often be found, unwinding. The eclectic menu includes smoked-duck-breast bruschetta and chocolate fondue with fruit. *244 E. 51st St. (212-319-9463). (I) AE, MC, V.*

The Four Seasons—Philip Johnson designed this cathedral of modernity. Picasso did the tapestry. And the place remains a classic 30 years later. The Grill Room is where the term *power lunch* got its start in the seventies. The pool room is where the rest of us go for achingly expensive fare like foie gras and figs and chocolate velvet. *99 E. 52nd St. (212-754-9494). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Genki Sushi—Not your typical sushi bar but a moving conveyor belt with color-coded dishes that indicate the price of your lunch. This midtown branch is the first American outpost of an Asian megachain headquartered in Singapore. The restaurant, whose high-tech design incorporates a wall of exposed sound panels, Lucite chairs and stools, and a Warholian upholstery pattern, also offers bento boxes, vegetarian dishes, sashimi, and a varied sake selection. *9 E. 46th St. (212-983-5018). (I–M) AE, MC, V.*

Giambelli 50th Ristorante—Upscale Northern Italian fare served in a warm and cozy atmosphere. The chef imports esoteric varieties of pasta from Italy to prepare his specialties; the fish and meat dishes are as carefully considered. *46 E. 50th St. (212-688-2760). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

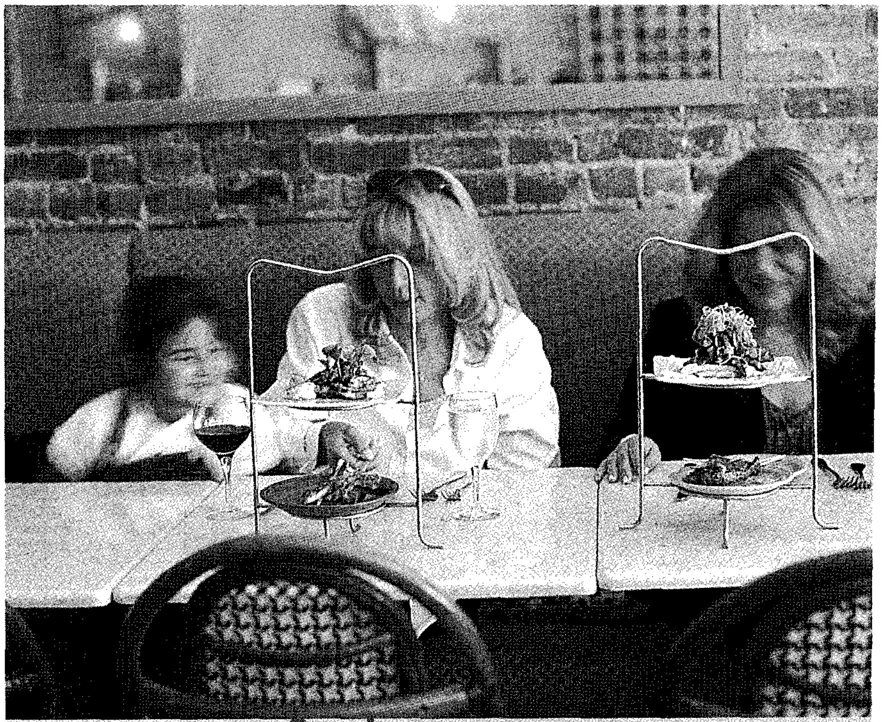
Jimmy Sung's—This elegant midtown restauran serves classic Hunan cuisine and a sampling o dishes from other regions—and, as demonstrate by its sushi bar, other countries. Private dinin rooms are perfect for special occasions, busines meetings, or mini-banquets. *219 E. 44th St. (212 682-5678). (I–M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Le Périgord—This romantic French restaurant nea Sutton Place is famous for its classically prepared elegantly presented French cuisine. The regula clientele, with a liberal smattering of celebritie and diplomats, is the type that dresses for dinner— a good thing, since jackets are required. Ope Sundays. Private rooms available for parties. *40 E. 52nd St. (212-755-6244). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC V.*

Lespinasse—Marie Antoinette, where are you? Thi ultra-formal dining room in the St. Regis Hotel— think Versailles and you get the rococo drift—i where you'll find Christian Delouvrier's masterfu classic French cooking. *2 E. 55th St., in the S Regis Hotel (212-339-6719). (E) AE, CB, DC MC, V.*

Maloney & Porcelli—A midtown steakhouse wit something extra, courtesy of consulting che David Burke's contributions—including something called "angry lobster"—plus whole leg o lamb, an extensive wine list, and an innovativ menu of American classics. A second-floor part room has a fireplace and skylights. *37 E. 50th S (212-750-2233). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Michael Jordan's The Steak House N.Y.C.—It's hard no to feel like a king surveying his kingdom from th balcony of the awesomely renovated Grand Cen



Opening Por Flavor

When one of the owners of Bistro Latino opened a new restaurant and tapas bar last month, he raided his own kitchen for a chef. At Sabor ("flavor" in Spanish), Ricardo Cardona, who's also cooked at Jimmy's Bronx Cafe, loads the crowd-pleasing tiered trays with Nuevo Latino tapas like black-bean crab cakes, smoked-chicken croquettes, plantain-crusted shrimp, and oxtail empanaditas. Still hungry? Proceed to platos principales like vegetable paella, roasted brook trout, or grilled Argentine sirloin with a chimichurri-Rioja jus. (462 Amsterdam Avenue, near 82nd Street; 212-579-2929.)

Photograph by Kenneth Ch

tral Terminal. And it's easy, with David Walzog's high-protein menu, to eat like an athlete: Choose from Maine lobster, a 44-ounce double porterhouse for two, barbecued short ribs, pepper-crusted buffalo sirloin, and a superlative New York strip. And if you (or your progeny) so desire, you can mark the occasion with a trip to the souvenir shop, for basketball- or steak-themed paraphernalia like baby rattles and dog bones. *23 Vanderbilt Ave., Grand Central Terminal (212-655-2300). (M–E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Monkey Bar—Since its swanky renovation by David Rockwell, this midtown landmark has undergone several chef changes. Andrew Chase has infused the menu and the retro-feeling dining room with new spirit by way of inspired new dishes like coriander-crusted duck breast with Bartlett pears, onion tart with potatoes and bacon, and loin of rabbit with confit and foie gras ravioli. Plus a special cocktail-hour canapé menu, to be enjoyed in the monkey-mural bar with nightly piano music. *60 E. 54th St. (212-838-2600). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Montebello—The staff at this cozy neighborhood restaurant offers a gracious welcome, while the kitchen provides upscale Northern Italian fare, especially affordable in the four-course pretheater menu. Specialties include angel's-hair pasta with fresh tomato and basil, and shrimp sautéed with cognac, broccoli, and red peppers. Private party room available. *120 E. 56th St. (212-753-1447). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Morton's of Chicago—This midwestern import has taken Manhattan by storm, winning converts with its tender double porterhouse and men's club charm. Hard to believe it's a chain. *551 Fifth Ave., at 45th St. (212-972-3315). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Naples 45 Ristorante e Pizzeria—This sprawling Italian restaurant and carry-out in the MetLife building serves authentic Neapolitan cuisine, including excellent thin-crust pizzas, baked to order by experienced pizza masters imported directly from Italy. Also try the twice-baked sandwiches and the wide array of wines by the glass. *200 Park Ave., at 45th St. (212-972-7001). (I–M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Nino's Positano—As is the wont of upscale Italian restaurants, this one—a more serene, mural-painted version of Nino's uptown—specializes in the food of a certain region, in this case, the south, and Positano in particular. But the menu still manages to read like the greatest hits of the Italian kitchen, with appetizers like Caprese salad, truffle-buttered asparagus with Parmesan, and lemony fried artichokes. Pastas range from the simple (fusilli with tomato-basil sauce) to the more complex (Cognac-infused seafood risotto), and main courses traverse similar territory. Whole roasted branzino is filleted tableside, making it almost as dramatic as Nino's famous lobster fra diavolo for two. *890 Second Ave., nr. 47th St. (212-355-5540). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Oceana—Fish-savant Rick Moonen's extensive and excellent seafood menu make this room, reminiscent of the dining cabin on an elegant ocean liner, a favorite for business lunches and romantic evenings alike. The upstairs bar is a perfect retreat for cocktails and seafood snacks in midtown. *55 E. 54th St. (212-759-5941). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Oscar's—This contemporary American brasserie is named for the Waldorf-Astoria's longtime maître d', Oscar Tschirky, creator of such legendary dishes as the Waldorf salad and veal Oscar. The menu leans toward updated classics like yellowfin-tuna tartare and smoked Hudson Valley foie gras with truffled red-wine marmalade. Designer Adam Tihany transported the history-laden dining room into the twenty-first century with a much-needed face-lift. *Lexington Ave. at 50th St. (212-872-4920). (M) AE, DS, MC, V.*

Peacock Alley—Under talented chef Laurent Gras, the Waldorf's posh dining room has broken with mealtime tradition. Rather than offer straightforward appetizers and entrées, Gras divides his menu into categories like ocean/river (lobster soup flavored with chestnuts), field/forest (seaweed and field greens), black truffle (Venetian pasta), and farm (rabbit chop wrapped in pasta). And rather than price each individual dish, he charges by the number of courses one selects: $54 for three, $67 for four, and up. The sommelier's suggested wine pairings are available for an additional price, and jackets are required. *301 Park Ave., in the Waldorf-Astoria (212-872-4895). (E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Pig 'n' Whistle on Third—There's plenty of convivial Irish-pub-style cheer in this East Side spinoff of a popular midtown haunt. The basic American menu offers staples like shepherd's pie, barbecued ribs, and onion loaf, plus panini sandwiches. Live music Saturday night, and "Irish breakfast" brunch offered on weekends. *922 Third Ave., nr. 55th St. (212-688-4646). (I–M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Smith & Wollensky—Carnivores keep this popular steakhouse jumping. All wood and brass, it has the look of a private club, the noise of a locker room, and a serious wine cellar. *Third Ave. at 49th St. (212-753-1530). (M) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Tropica—Always packed at lunch, but squeeze in at the bar and order the salmon and a glass of tropical iced tea. The dining room serves the most imaginative seafood in town, but be sure to go on a weekday—the restaurant, located in the lobby of the MetLife Building, is closed Saturday and Sunday. *200 Park Ave., nr. 45th St. (212-867-6767). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Vong—Chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten's little Third Avenue-by-way-of-Bangkok palace was designed by architect David Rockwell, and it's a showy temple indeed—there's gold leaf on those walls. The menu's full of wonders, starting with the crab rolls and coconut-milk-and-galangal soup. *200 E. 54th St. (212-486-9592). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

43rd–56th Streets, West Side

Adrienne—After extensive renovations, the elegant American restaurant in this posh midtown hotel has reopened with a new look and a new, sophisticated menu. A few of the more notable dishes include a warm lobster salad with braised mango, and a confit of wild striped bass with a shallot vinaigrette. *700 Fifth Ave., at 55th St., in the Peninsula (212-903-3918). (M–E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Ben Benson's Steak House—This rollicking steakhouse has long fed hordes of hungry, beef-eating businessmen and the people who love them. The festive air gets pretty thick by the bar, where cigars prevail, but the dining room is devoted entirely to the consumption of standards like lobsters, crab cakes, veal, and four cuts of steak. Free validated parking available. *123 W. 52nd St. (212-581-8888). (E) AE, DS, MC, V.*

Bombay Palace—This newly refurbished, elegant Indian restaurant has been serving its refined versions of tandoori lobster, lamb kandhari, and chicken kashmiri to a midtown office crowd for years. Try the excellent selection of Indian breads. *30 W. 52nd St. (212-541-7777). (M) AE, MC, TM, V.*

Brasserie Bit—With David Ruggerio supervising the kitchen at this new theater-district restaurant, customers can expect a bit of Italian cooking to seep into the French-American brasserie menu. Pre- or post-curtain appetites are sated with hearty fare like braised short ribs with olive-oil-enriched mashed potatoes, and garlic-roasted pork shank. Want something less heavy-duty? Try the European tapas, served at the serpentine zinc bar. *258 W. 44th St. (212-869-4440). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Christer's—Famous for its spectacular selection of salmon, this Scandinavian-inspired restaurant, designed by David Rockwell to resemble a colorful, cozy mountain lodge, is a great choice for contemporary renditions of seafood. Open Sundays. *145 W. 55th St. (212-974-7224). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Cité—An extravagant French steakhouse, marble and pewter with blazing chandeliers, and a more affordable grill next door. *120 W. 51st St. (212-956-7100). (M–E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Da Rosina—A convenient pretheater location, specializing in homemade pasta and other casual Italian fare, like baked polenta marinara and veal scallopine. Try the $20 prix fixe dinner. *342 W. 46th St. (212-977-7373). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Johnnie's—This small, old-world Italian restaurant has been a midtown fixture for over three and a

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half decades. The menu runs the gamut from basic pastas to chicken, veal, and seafood dishes; the $14.95 dinner special is a particularly good deal. *135 W. 45th St. (212-869-5565). (I–M) AE, DC, MC, TM, V.*

La Côte Basque—Jean-Jacques Rachou's transplanted shrine to French cooking has preserved the Basque murals and the coddled atmosphere of the original location one block east. Modernized, with a menu more "American with a French accent," the old-world institution has been successfully reborn. *60 W. 55th St. (212-688-6525). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Langan's—American cuisine in a theater-district shrine to the stars of stage and screen. Food ranges from Black Angus steaks and herb-crusted rack of lamb to crab cakes and marinated duck breast. Theatergoers will want to know about the $23.50 prix fixe dinner, and music lovers about the live jazz and blues on Saturday night and the Sunday jazz brunch. *150 W. 47th St. (212-869-5482). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Les Pyrénées—French Provençal cuisine. Cassoulet from Toulouse recommended, as well as filet mignon and frogs' legs. A rustic atmosphere. A lot of theatergoers. *251 W. 51st St. (212-246-0044). (M) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Local—This theater-district American bistro has lots of cozy booths and turns out sophisticated, refreshingly imaginative fare with international accents but doesn't go overboard. Try the pan-seared scallops with Maine crab cake and sweet-corn chowder; the roasted North Atlantic salmon with spring vegetables; and the excellent desserts. *224 W. 47th St. (212-921-2005). (M–E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Martini's—Convenient for pre- and post-theater dining, with a buzzing year-round sidewalk café and chef Richard Krause's rustic homemade pastas, charcoal-grilled seafood, and, of course, multiple variations of the house drink. *810 Seventh Ave., at 53rd St. (212-767-1717). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Osteria del Circo—This place is always buzzing, partly because of its excellent bloodlines (Sirio Maccioni's brood of charming sons runs the place) and partly because of its flavorful, home-style Italian menu. Be sure to try anything created by proud mother (and food consultant) Mrs. Maccioni. *120 W. 55th St. (212-265-3636). (E) AE, MC, V.*

Redeye Grill—Just what the Carnegie Hall neighborhood needed: a huge room with nudes on the pillars and all manner of smoked fish on the bar. The signature dish, dancing shrimp, is great for sharing. And don't leave without sampling the banana-cream pie. *888 Seventh Ave., at 56th St. (212-541-9000). (M–E) AE, DS, MC, V.*

René Pujol—This theater-district oasis offers fine provincial French cooking in a sweet country-inn atmosphere. The conventionally familiar menu includes such specials as pan-seared duck breast with fruit chutney, steamed cod with coriander and ginger vinaigrette, and a salad of warm lobster, mesclun, and julienned vegetables. *321 W. 51st St. (212-246-3023). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Sitar Indian Cuisine—This casual restaurant attracts office workers and midtown's ever-growing hordes of tourists, who come for house specialties like ginger chicken, lamb shaslik, onion bhajia, and the always-popular chicken tikka masala. *58 W. 56th St. (212-581-1155). (I–M) AE, DS, MC, V.*

St. Andrews—In what might be New York's only full-fledged Scottish restaurant, the bartenders wear kilts, the scotch is single-malt, and the décor consists of wine cabinets, old Scottish Rail posters, and pictures of famous golf courses. The hearty steak-and-seafood menu features dishes like rack of lamb, tenderloin, and brook trout stuffed with crabmeat and Irish oatmeal in a scotch-whiskey sauce. *120 W. 44th St. (212-840-8413). (I–M) AE, MC, V.*

Tapika—Chef David Walzog's spicy cooking has transformed a formerly subdued space into a lively canteen with his version of haute Southwestern. Try the black-bean purée with chorizo and garlic flatbread or the grilled rabbit loin with cilantro oil and habanero sauce. The bar has its own snack menu and a super selection of microbrews and tequilas. *950 Eighth Ave., at 56th St. (212-397-3737). (M–E) AE, MC, V.*

Torre di Pisa—David Rockwell designed this midtown Italian import as a surreal version of the Leaning Tower. Pane fritto con prosciutto di Parma and fagotto al funghi porcini are examples of the chef's updated Tuscan standards. A separate cigar/smoking room is available for private parties. *19 W. 44th St. (212-398-4400). (E) AE, MC, V.*

Utsav Festive India—Only the bar of this regional Indian restaurant is located at street level; the contemporary dining room itself is built into a bridge spanning two midtown skyscrapers. The lunch buffet costs a paltry $11.95, while à la carte entrées include ginger rack of lamb, tandoori filet mignon, and Bengali fish paturi. The management promises a lineup of food festivals highlighting the varied cooking styles of the subcontinent. *1185 Sixth Ave., nr. 46th St. (212-575-2525). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Wu Kong—Shanghai soup dumplings continue to emigrate out of Chinatown—and Flushing—and into neighborhoods formerly deprived of the intense pork-and-crab-infused mouthfuls. In addition, there's Grand Marnier jumbo shrimp, smoked vegetable duck, and sliced beef tendon with hot pepper sauce, plus a full sushi menu. *30 W. 46th St. (212-997-4757). (I–M) AE, MC, V.*

57th–60th Streets

Armani Café—This stylish midtown haven for weary shoppers (and informed eaters) on the sixth floor and rooftop terrace of the clothing store offer wonderfully fresh salads, al dente pastas, delicious sandwiches, and entrée specials like chicken breas with lentils, roasted vegetables, and polenta. *60 Madison Ave., nr. 57th St. (212-715-0500). (M) AE DC, MC, V.*

Brooklyn Diner U.S.A.—Don't be fooled by the neon lights and the geographically incorrect cheerines of the wait staff. If this is how owner Shelly Fireman chooses to memorialize the Brooklyn of hi youth (which happens to have been spent in the Bronx), we won't complain, despite prices tha would shame any genuine greasy spoon (entrées $13.95 to $24.95). It's comfort-food heaven: big portions of exuberantly non-diet Americana like pigs in a blanket, sliced from the overgrown house "fifteen-bite hot dog"; a fresh-turkey sandwich on a buttery roll with stellar mashed potatoes and cranberries that taste better than the day afte Thanksgiving; ham-flecked linguine baked in too-rich-to-finish sauce that modestly bills itself a macaroni and cheese. *212 West 57th Street (212 977-2280). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Jennifer's Restaurant—This casual Italian restaurant serving well-prepared standard and classic Italian American dishes, including shrimp stuffed with crabmeat and linguini with whole lobster in a garlicky tomato sauce, is a welcome refuge fo

Opening
Carriage Trade

It's taken the owners of Atlas a year to wangle a sidewalk permit, but they've finally opened Atlas Cafe, 22 seats of prime alfresco real estate opposite Central Park and the pungent pathway of its horse-and-buggy fleet. New chef Paul Liebrandt has created a separate café menu, simpler and cheaper than the one indoors but still pretty posh: a dainty disk of a tomato-Parmesan tart draped with anchovies; tempura-fried artichoke and pumpkin with soy dipping sauce; a juicy filet mignon "BLT" on brioche toast; moist chicken breast in an herb jus. Ice-cream sandwiches and peach pie extend the illusion of summer, and when that wears off, there's always heat lamps. (40 Central Park South; 212-759-9191.)

Photograph by Liz Stege

tourists and local businesspeople who've had it with West 57th Street's theme-restaurant circus. *117 W. 58th St. (212-397-4256). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

The Manhattan Ocean Club—Savor your seafood in an elegant dining room decorated with Picasso ceramics and Brazilian-red-cherry floors. *57 W. 58th St. (212-371-7777). (E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Nascimento—This fun, romantic Brazilian restaurant with a supplement of Italian dishes features live entertainment nightly and Brazilian music on Saturdays. Try the authentic Bahian specialties like moqueca de peixe (fish stew made with dende oil) and Brazil's hearty national black bean dish from Rio, feijoada completa. *1068 First Ave., nr. 58th St. (212-755-6875). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

San Domenico—Toques off to owner Tony May, who may have done more for the cause of serious Italian cooking in New York than any other single restaurateur. His dining room is formal, and the food is wonderful. *240 Central Park So. (212-265-5959). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Shelly's New York—Bronx-born, Brooklyn-obsessed, Manhattan-based restaurateur Shelly Fireman tends to make big, personal statements: the flashy neon façade of his Brooklyn Diner USA, Fireman's of Brooklyn, and this, the latest place made in his own image (in a space that was originally an Art Deco-era Horn & Hardart). Only the assimilative Fireman would offer towering shellfish platters alongside newfangled chicken chow mein, barbecued ribs, and a burger audaciously crowned with seared foie gras and make it work. *104 W. 57th St. (212-245-2422). (M–E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Above 60th Street, East Side

Fireman's of Brooklyn—The man behind midtown's nostalgic Brooklyn Diner expands on his outer-borough fantasy with this seafood house, which features a shrimp, oyster, and chowder bar; market-fresh fish; and landlubber options like filet mignon and "Bubba Fireman's chicken." *1081 Third Ave., nr. 64th St. (212-838-7570). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Hi-Life Restaurant & Lounge—A seamless fusion of a steakhouse and an ocean-liner lounge. The dining room's landscape is speckled with round booths so big and luxurious that they seem structural. This place has two gears: As the evening wears on, the young-moms-with-strollers eatery gives way to an East Side hot spot complete with a sushi bar. *1340 First Ave., at 72nd St. (212-249-3600). (M) AE, DC, MC, TM, V.*

ino's—Elegant Italian with a romantic mural garden and nightly live entertainment. Try the grilled dishes—tuna on a bed of balsamic onions, double-cut veal chop—or the lobster fra diavolo. *1354 First Ave., nr. 72nd St. (212-988-0002). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

ark Avenue Cafe—A polished, countrified American café for business lunches and off-duty get-to-know-yous in the evening. Chef David Burke makes the tired catchall "American fare" sing, and keeps the haute neighbors rapt with signature dishes like rack of lamb and his swordfish chop. *100 E. 63rd St. (212-644-1900). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

enang—This Malaysian mini-dynasty began in Queens and has sprouted multiple Manhattan locations. Sample such exotic offerings as roti canai, beef rendang, and sarang burung in environs that strive to evoke the tropics. *1596 Second Ave., nr. 83rd St. (212-585-3838). (M–E) AE, MC, V.*

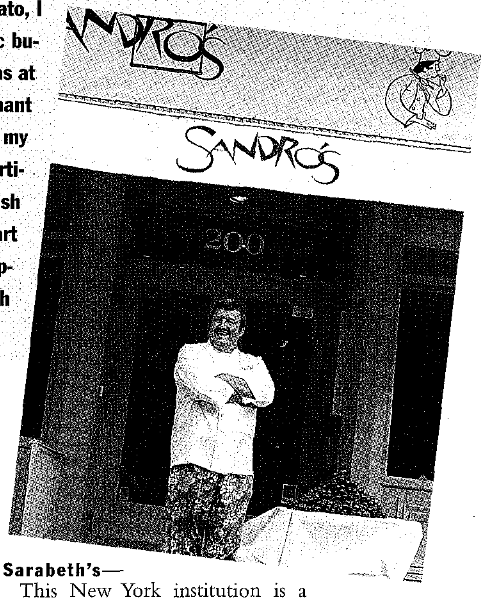
ost House—Clubby and comfortable, this handsome dining room specializes in good quality and big portions. The peppery Cajun-style steak is a favorite, especially with a side order of French fries or onion rings. There are dishes with decidedly less cholesterol—poached salmon, say, or lemon chicken—but this isn't a place to watch your waistline. Seriously. *28 E. 63rd St., in the Lowell Hotel (212-935-2888). (E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

rata—With its fish-market display, its Greek spreads and salads, and its simply grilled seafood (sushi-quality octopus, for instance), this bustling Upper East Side sideline of the Patsy's pizza chain offers an affordable, less dramatic alternative to Estiatorio Milos, where the chef used to work. *1331 Second Ave., nr. 70th St. (212-535-3800). (M) AE, MC, V.*

ASK GAEL

Make it Italian. Make it simple.

If you've been eating around for a while, you may recognize the caricature and the bright-yellow awning—a signal that Luma's narrow storefront (most recently, Siena) is now Sandro's. The massive Roman chef Sandro Fioriti barely spoke a word of English fifteen years ago when restaurateur Tony May lured him to Manhattan by backing a spot in the shadow of the Queensboro Bridge (where Bouterin is today). Fioriti's flattened baby artichokes, crisp-fried in the style of Rome's ghetto, and his sea-urchin-perfumed ravioli spoke for him. Then Sandro disappeared, off to the Caribbean. Now he's feeling his way into a revival of his original menu. Pans smashing and loud shouts from the kitchen bring the dining room to a hush. "We should maybe to put in some music," the manager muses. Eventually, luscious, crisp pan-fried calamari arrive as remembered, ever-so-scantily floured, along with big haystacks of sprightly salad. Though I can't detect any hint of sea urchin in the ravioli with scallops and tomato, I fall for spaghettini with lemon and Rome's classic bucatini amatriciana all over again. (Bravo for pastas at $10 to $15 and modestly priced wines.) Indignant that the whole fish of the day is sold out, one of my guests finds comfort in a marvelous sauté of artichokes, tomatoes, potatoes, and some Italian fish none of us has ever heard of. A rustic chocolate tart and memories of days past in an old-fashioned apple cake tell me you *can* go home again. (200 Ninth Avenue, near 22nd Street; 212-633-8033.)



Above 60th Street, West Side

Bello Giardino—As the name implies, this pleasingly priced neighborhood Italian has a nice garden and a friendly staff serving well-prepared standards. Try the lobster ravioli and the red snapper cooked with white wine. *71 West 71st St. (212-875-1512). (I–M) ($).*

Cafe des Artistes—A smartly run, wonderfully romantic bistro with frolicking nudes on the walls. Open and serving all the time. Stop in before or after a jaunt to Lincoln Center. *1 W. 67th St. (212-877-3500). (M–E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Penang—This Malaysian mini-dynasty began in Queens and has sprouted multiple Manhattan locations. Sample such exotic offerings as roti canai, beef rendang, and sarang burung in environs that strive to evoke the tropics. *240 Columbus Ave., at 71st St. (212-769-3988). (M–E) AE, MC, V.*

Picholine—Chef Terrance Brennan's French-Mediterranean cuisine is as beautiful to look at as it is delicious to eat. Try the risotto, smoky with tender duck and wild mushrooms, and velvety foie gras with peach coulis, and save room for a glass of port to accompany the amazingly rich and well-chosen cheese course. *35 W. 64th St. (212-724-8585). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Restaurant 222—Cozy and romantic, with the feel of a townhouse, Frank Valenza's top-rated New American West Sider is a luxurious surprise in a neighborhood nearly bereft of them. The menu is full of high-ticket items like Beluga caviar, Kobe steak, truffles, and foie gras, which makes the $29.95 pretheater dinner, available from 5 to 6:30, a great deal. And now, lunch is served Tuesday through Friday. *222 W. 79th St. (212-799-0400). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Sapphire Indian Cuisine—A couple of partners from TriBeCa's Salaam Bombay have brought regional Indian cuisine to Columbus Circle, an area in sore need of a tandoori infusion. The prix fixe lunch buffet is a bargain, and all the currently trendy territories (Goa, Gujarat) are well-represented. *1845 Broadway, nr. 61st St. (212-245-4444). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Sarabeth's—This New York institution is a homey place for upscale down-home food like chicken potpie and pancakes. It also offers a children's menu and a mouthwatering bakery counter, with homemade, award-winning jams and preserves. *423 Amsterdam Ave., nr. 80th St. (212-496-6280). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Brooklyn

Cucina—A labor of love. Northern Italian in an elegant and very well appointed room. Sensational antipasti. *256 Fifth Ave., nr. Garfield Pl. (718-230-0711). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Peter Luger—Steak for one, steak for two, steak for four, and creamed spinach. Apply for your own house credit card, or bring cash. *178 Broadway, at Bedford Ave. (718-387-7400). (E) ($).*

Two Tom's—Firehouse-kitchen ambience and a waiter who tells you what you want to eat. The double-rib pork chops are peerless, and the escarole is great, too, but refuse the mercilessly overcooked pasta when it's offered. Eat early during the week and call ahead on weekends. Regular private parties make getting a table frustrating, but it's always worth the trouble. *255 Third Ave., nr. Union St. (718-875-8689). (I) ($).*

Staten Island

Aesop's Tables—Arrive by ferry or bridge to this charming bistro and garden that serves inventive, bold Mediterranean fare with an emphasis on handpicked fresh seafood. *1233 Bay St., Rosebank (718-720-2005). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

otograph by Carina Salvi.

nightlife

Ryan Adams...¡Cubanismo!...Queens

Concerts

Barbra Streisand—9/27–9/28 at 8. *Madison Square Garden, 34th St. and Seventh Ave. (1-888-9BARBRA). Sold out.*

Ben Harper and the Innocent Criminals—9/27–9/28 at 7. *The Roseland Ballroom, 239 W. 52nd St. (212-307-7171). $24.50–$27.50.*

Culture Club—9/27 at 8. *Beacon Theater, 74th St. at Broadway (212-307-7171). $35–$50.*

Fito Paez—9/27 at 8: *Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. (212-840-2824). $27.50–$35.*

Marisa Monte—9/30 at 8. *Beacon Theater, 74th St. and Broadway (212-307-7171). $45.*

Small Stages

Arlene Grocery—9/25: The Skinny; Mark Eliot Miranda. 9/26: Amy Fairchild; Hippy Nuts. 9/27: The Red King; Muzzy Lactin. 9/28: Kohl; Lost Beat Heroes. 9/29: Liquid; the Pasties. *95 Stanton St. (212-358-1633). $.*

B.B. King Blues Club & Grill—9/25: BBQ Bob and the Spareribs. 9/26: Kerry Kearney. 9/27: Cephas and Wiggins. 9/28: Montgomery Gentry. 9/29: Maria Muldaur. 9/30: Roomful of Blues. *243 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144).*

Baby Jupiter— 9/25: House of Red; Hissyfits. 9/27: Puckett; David Brass. 9/28: Dog Fly Religion; King Missile III. 9/29: Babloo; Psychedelic Breakfast. 9/30: Black LIB; Darediablo. *170 Orchard St. (212-780-0287).*

Bottom Line—9/26: Terri Clark. 9/27: Grey Eye Glances. *15 W. 4th St. (212-228-7880).*

Bowery Ballroom—9/25–9/26: Sleater-Kinney. 9/28: Marvelous 3; SR-71. 9/29: North Mississippi Allstars. 9/30: Vic Thrill. 10/1: Black Eyed Peas. 10/2: Trans Am. *6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111).*

Fez—Thursdays: Mingus Big Band. Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays: Kiki & Herb, "Playing For Time." 9/25: Lea DeLaria; Justynn Daniels. 9/27: Va Va Voom Room. 9/29: Mae Moore. *Time Cafe, 380 Lafayette St. (212-533-2680).*

Irving Plaza—9/25: La Ley. 9/27: Queens of the Stone Age. 9/30: "Giant Step" presents: Carl Craig; Moodymann. *17 Irving Pl. (212-777-6800).*

Joe's Pub—An intimate space that boasts the most eclectic booking in town. Expect everything from torch singers to underground hip-hoppers to New Age composers. Mondays: "Benefit," a downtown music revue. Tuesdays: "Original Roses" with D.J. Beverly Bond. Wednesdays: Reggae music with "Fever." Thursdays: Editors, scenemakers, and boldface names take their turns spinning their favorite records with the "Personality D.J. Series." Sundays: the deep-house-oriented "Love Bazaar" with D.J. MKL. 9/25 and 10/2: William Finn. 9/27: Toni Smith. 9/28: Boubacar Traore. 9/29: Ahn Trio. 9/30–10/1: Carl Hancock Rux: The No Black Male Show. *425 Lafayette St. (212-239-6200)*

Knitting Factory—9/25: Hasidic New Wave. 9/26: Band deBlatt. 9/27: Mary Timony. 9/28: Jeff Robinson's Live Bird. 9/29: Counterclockwise Bobby Previte. 9/30: Gong. 10/1: Billy Bang. 10/2: Hiroshi K. *74 Leonard St. (212-219-3055).*

Makor—9/26: Local Bands Night. 9/27: Wax Trio. 9/28: "What I Like About Jew Songwriters Series" with Ben Lee; Patti Rothberg; Richard X. Heyman; Cindy Kaplan. 10/1: Ted Rosenthal Trio. *35 W. 67th St. (212-601-1000)*

Manitoba's—Mondays: Beat Rodeo. Thursdays in September: Gret Garing. Fridays: Adam Roth. 9/26: "Hardcore" with Misstress Formika. 9/27: Harley Fine. 9/29: The Dark Horses. 9/30: Heap. *99 Ave. B (212-982-2511).*

Maxwell's—9/27: Winefield; Eddie Sculler; Peter Bruntnell. 9/28: Shark Quest; the Apes. 9/29: D.J. Spooky; Arto Lindsay; Anti Pop Consortium. 9/30: Skanatra Rathskeller. 10/2: Atom & His Package; the Anniversary. *1039 Washington St., Hoboken, N.J. (201-653-1703).*

Mercury Lounge—9/25: Aden. 9/26: Young Dubliners. 9/27: Josh Rouse. 9/28: Soulhat; PaloAlto. 9/29: Juliana Hatfield. 9/30: Burn Witch Burn; Butterfly Joe. 10/1: The Friggs; Girltoucher. 10/2: Stage. *217 E. Houston St. (212-260-4700).*

Rodeo Bar—9/25: Western Caravan. 9/26: Hugh Pool. 9/27: Tandy; Robert Burke Warren. 9/29: Star City. 9/30: Jimmy Nations. *375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (212-683-6500).*

S.O.B.'s—9/25: Extrellas Cubanas. 9/26: Cubanismo. 9/29: Toshi Kubota; Zin. 9/30: Ogans. *204 Varick St. (212-243-4940).*

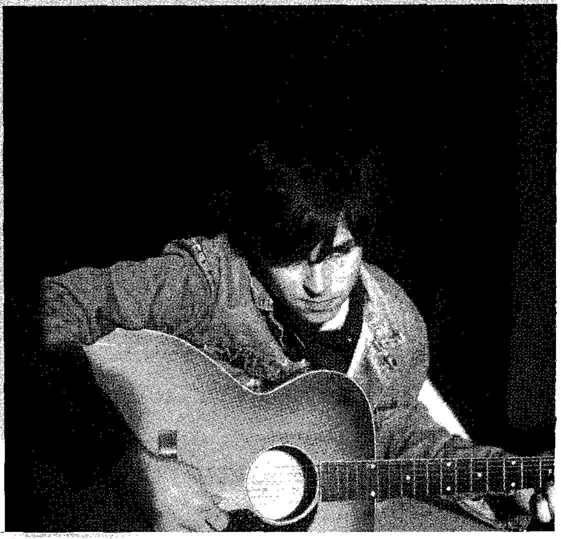
Wetlands—Mondays: D.J. Logic. Tuesdays: Illuminati. Thursdays: Groove Collective. 9/27: Fat Mama. 9/28–9/29: Dispatch. 9/30: Sector 9; Brothers Past. *161 Hudson St. (212-386-3600). $.*

Clubs

Centro-Fly—Like Vinyl, Centro-Fly is hopping with big-name D.J. talent nearly every day of the week. Thursdays: "Subliminal Sessions" with D.J. Erick Morillo and occasional special guests like Armand van Helden and "Little" Louie Vega. The second Friday of every month: Long-running house party "N'Ice," which made an exodus from Baktun after more than a year at the meatpacking-district nightspot. Third Friday of every month: House party "Con-fu-sion," also a refugee from Baktun, with big-name D.J.'s like Chicago's Pierre. Saturdays: Energetic house and big beat with "Plant." The last Saturday of every month, Plant presents D.J.'s Junior Sanchez and Roger Sanchez (no relation), two of New York

Performance
Manhattan South

Ryan Adams (pictured) grew up in Raleigh, North Carolina, where he assembled Whiskeytown, the raucous, ambitious alt-country band that drank and fought its way to near-greatness and total dissolution. He now lives in Nashville, down the street from Lucinda Williams. But his beautifully funny and blue first solo album, *Heartbreaker* (Bloodshot Records), while full of twangy guitars and Adams's smoky southern rasp of a singing voice, is as indelibly a New York City record as anything ever created by George Gershwin or Bob Dylan. All sorts of wondrous urban miniatures pop up in his lyrics ("I'm as calm as a fruit stand in New York / And maybe as strange"). And *Heartbreaker* nails the raw and tangled emotions of falling in and out of love in the big city, partly because Adams recorded and mostly wrote it in a fourteen-day blur. He spells out his inspiration, literally, in the capital letters of one song title: "AMY," like much of the album, is for the girlfriend he followed to the city, lived with in the East Village for two years, and lost. "I love who New York made me become," Adams says, calling from his friend Van Alston's house in Raleigh. "There's this whole self-mythology of being a southern artist, and there's a lot of bullshit attached to it, and New York stripped me of all that stuff and taught me to be a straight-up person. It's kind of ironic that I would fall in love with someone so hard who lives there. Our lease ran out, but things between us were running out, too." Adams is a passionate performer no matter the location, but playing at Fez on October 2 and 3 may dial up the intensity to bursting. "I can't wait to get close to the source of the thing that made these songs," Adams says. It's not clear whether he's referring to Amy or New York, and it doesn't much matter. CHRIS SMITH



house music's finest. Mondays: Frankie Inglese's retro-soul, funk, and R&B party "Soul Kitchen." 9/26: Drum 'n' bass producer Photek makes a rare D.J. appearance. His new album, *Solaris*, contains one of the best singles of the year called "Mine To Give," which mixes soulful house and dark, growling basslines with glorious results. *45 W. 21st St. (212-803-7859).*

Cheetah—A jungle-themed club with a spacious dance floor and a small, yet powerful sound system. Thursdays: "Clique," where the socialite set grooves to hip-hop beats. Fridays: Blokes go crazy to trance and house at "GBH" ("Great British House"). Saturdays: Thumping tribal house and live percussionists at "Cherchez La Femme." Sundays: "Boys Nite" with D.J. Merritt. 10/1: Nicky Siano, the D.J. who masterminded the wildly campy "Twelve West," returns to Cheetah with a new party called "Mardi Gras." *12 W. 21st St. (212-206-7770).*

Frank's Lounge—A bare-bones bar and dance spot that hosts Lorie and E-Man's frenzied but low-key house-music party "Bang The Party" every Friday. The party, which has been at venues all over town from the 205 Club to Baktun, is just now settling into its own groove. And what a groove it is: On a recent Friday, track-suited break-dancers, baggy-pants-clad dancers, and bare-chested muscle men got down to the ecstatic house of D.J. White Mike with a floor-shaking intensity. *660 Fulton St., at S. Elliott St., Fort Greene, Brooklyn (212-726-1322).*

Fun—This sprawling, bi-level, warehouselike space doesn't book big-name D.J. talent, but it's got one of the coolest interiors in clubland, with huge projections of Japanese anime, a vertiginous yet comfy balcony area, and a seemingly gravity-defying D.J. booth. Best of all, Fun recently snagged the cyber-fetish party "Click+Drag" from the now-defunct Mother. *130 Madison St., under the Manhattan Bridge (212-964-0303). $5.*

Limelight—The Limelight is officially back from the dead thanks to its powerhouse weekend nights, which see the likes of Detroit techno icon Jeff Mills, the trance heavies of the "Gatecrasher" crew, and drum-'n'-bass D.J.'s of "Physics" grace the turntables. The mazelike club's renaissance comes just in time, as other megaclubs like Twilo have become uncomfortably packed, verging on the claustrophobic. 9/30: Mocean Worker. *660 Sixth Ave., at 20th St. (212-807-7780).*

The Roxy—The cavernous Chelsea institution's deeply entertaining and mysteriously underattended Tuesday- and Wednesday-night roller-skating jam keeps boogie queens' wheels spinning till the wee hours. Fridays: "Big Fridays" offer big fun for the weekender straight crowd. Saturdays: Superstar D.J. Victor Calderone spins house for the Chelsea boys while hard-bodied go-go boys dance on the bar. *515 W. 18th St. (212-627-0404). $.*

Shine—This downtown spot is now host to excellent, enthusiastically received D.J.-oriented nights as well as up-and-coming rock and dance acts. Mondays: "Giant Step Mondays" with the gloriously great D.J. Ron Trent. Tuesdays: "Prohibited Beatz," electronica in all its many and varied subgenres with D.J.'s Swingsett and Yoshi. Thursdays: Reggae and soul with "Mash Potatoes." Fridays: hip-hop with D.J.'s Stretch Armstrong and Mateo. Saturdays: D.J. Greg Poole's dance-centric "Tremendous." 9/25: Angie Aparo. *285 W. Broadway (212-941-0900).*

Spa—The health-and-wellness theme (white walls, bathrooms designed to look like saunas) is thankfully mostly unobtrusive, and the crowd is thankfully not excessively chic. Spa promoter Steven Lewis maintains the kind of balance between office zhlubs, club kids, and A-listers he pulled off so nicely in the early days of the now-defunct Life.

Ground Rules:

In clubland, promptness is *not* next to godliness; expect shows to start much later than promised. $ = cash only.

Performance

Mambo Kings

They're best known for melding percussive Cuban rhythms with swinging jazz, but on the new album *Mardi Gras Mambo*, ¡Cubansimo! (pictured) has added yet another ingredient to the musical mix: ecstatic, New Orleans–bred funeral-marching-band music. The multigenre party comes to S.O.B's on September 26. (See "Small Stages.")

hotograph by Michael Halsband.

Wednesdays: "Big Bad Dodgy Disco," with new wave and rock spun by D.J. Paul Sevigny. Thursdays: Superpromoter Erich Conrad's "Glam," with D.J. Jackie Christie. Fridays: Marc Ronson and Grandmaster Flash spin hip-hop and R&B for the A-listers at "Hollywood 2000." *76 E. 13th St. (212-388-1060).*

Twilo—Twilo is the superclub of the moment, thanks to a revolving lineup of dance music's biggest marquee attractions. Wednesdays: The upstairs lounge hosts hard house and techno with "2K Wednesdays," a low-key alternative to the frenzied Friday nights. Fridays: World-class D.J.'s like Carl Cox, Sasha and Digweed, and Cassius play for a mixed crowd of drag divas and on-the-prowl straights. Saturdays: Aging club king D.J. Junior Vasquez spins for his bare-chested Chelsea-boy following. 9/29: Sasha and Digweed. *530 W. 27th St. (212-268-1600).*

Vinyl—Stripped of its liquor license, this once-hedonistic downtown space is now a dance-music purist's paradise and quite possibly the best club in the city. Wednesdays: "Little" Louie Vega spins at the relaxed, low-key (for now), dance-friendly (check out the break-dancers in the back of the room) house party "Dance Ritual." Fridays: Hard, trippy house (affectionately nicknamed "K-hole house" by its aficionados) from D.J. Danny Tenaglia. Saturdays: Timmy Regisford's fantastic house-music party "Shelter," which at about seven in the morning becomes the city's most adventurous party as Regisford bangs out everything from the Afro-beat of Fela Kuti to the ambient, pillow-soft house of Mr. Fingers. Sundays: François K, Joe Claussell, and Danny Krivit spin at the now-legendary afternoon party "Body & Soul." Arrive early or you'll face a devastatingly long line at the door. *6 Hubert St. (212-343-1379).*

Jazz

"Jazz at Lincoln Center" presents: Wycliffe Gordon—9/24 at 5 and 8; featuring a new film score to the 1925 Oscar Micheaux silent film, *Body and Soul. Avery Fisher Hall, 64th St. at Columbus Ave. (212-721-6500). $55–$20.*

"Jazz Insights: The Legacy of Charlie Parker"—Lecture and performance series hosted by Arnold Jay Smith. All lectures begin at 7:45. 9/26: James Spaulding. *The New School, 66 W. 12th St. (212-229-5783). $30.*

Birdland—Proof that jazz is alive and well in midtown, this classy boîte serves up some fine southern cuisine along with its first-rate lineup. Sundays: Chico O'Farrill Afro-Cuban Jazz Big Band. Mondays: The Toshiko Akiyoshi Jazz Orchestra. Tuesdays: The Famous Duke Ellington Orchestra directed by Paul Ellington. 9/27: Koch Jazz Birdland Sessions CD-release celebration. 9/28–9/30: Wallace Roney All-Star Quintet. *315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080).*

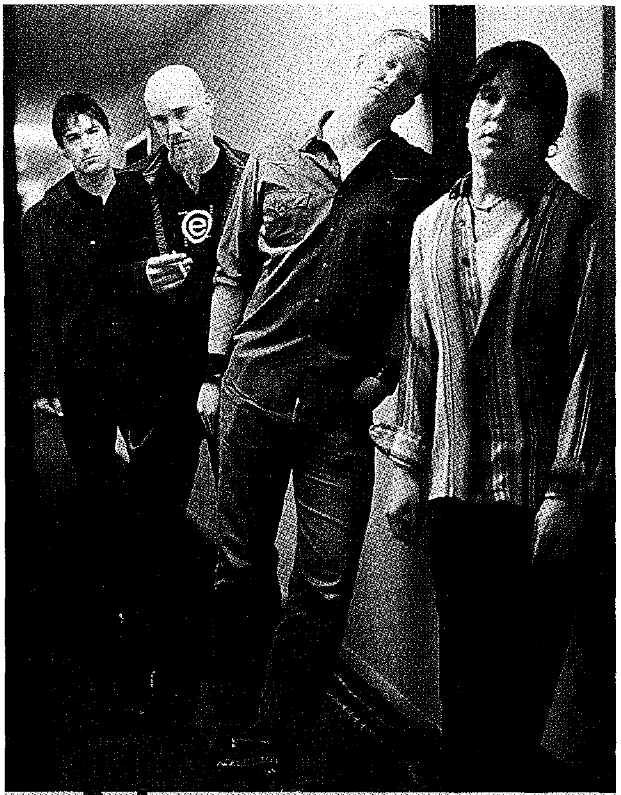
Blue Note—With a great sound system and a decent view from every seat in the house, the "jazz capital of the world" often presents two top-flight artists in one evening. Sets at 9 and 11:30. 9/26–10/1: Monty Alexander. *131 W. 3rd St. (212-475-8592).*

Cajun—A brassy and brightly lit bit of New Orleans in Chelsea dedicated to Preservation Hall–style Dixieland. Regulars include Joe Muranyi, clarinetist during the last six years of Louis Armstrong's All Stars; Eddy Davis, a jazz banjoist; and Chuck Folds, a stride pianist and sometime accompanist to trumpet legend Doc Cheatham. *129 Eighth Ave., at 16th St. (212-691-6174).*

City Hall—Mondays in the Granite Room: The Charles Mingus Orchestra. $15 cover, $10 for students. Beginning 9/29, the Charles Mingus Orchestra will play Fridays. *131 Duane St. (212-227-7777).*

Iridium—In the surreal basement across from Lincoln center, you'll find formidable jazz comers and the occasional legend. Thoughtful table placement minimizes a couple of structural columns' potentially disastrous effects on sight lines. Monday nights, the Les Paul Quartet holds office hours. Sets Sun.–Thurs. at 8:30 and 10:30, with extra midnight set Fri. and Sat. 9/26–10/1: Phil Woods Quintet. *44 W. 63rd St., across from Lincoln Center (212-582-2121).*

The Jazz Standard—A sprawling room with terrific sound and the best club menu in the city, the Jazz Standard offers a fresh mix of estimable hard-bop-



Performance

Stone Age Wasteland

Proud pill-poppers and adherents of the sort of narcotic sludge rock perfected by the Stooges in the seventies, Queens of the Stone Age (pictured) positively baffled hip-hop-metal-loving headbangers when they performed at this year's Ozzfest. A far more positive (if not exactly cuddly) reception should come their way when they play Irving Plaza September 27. (See "Small Stages.")

pers, jazz greats, and artists on the rise. Mon., Tues., and Fri. at 5:30 and Sat. at 7, guitarist David O'Rourke swings in the upstairs 27 Standard bar. Sets Wed. and Thurs. at 8 and 10; Fri. and Sat. at 8, 10:30, and midnight; and Sun. at 7 and 9. $15–$25 cover; $10 minimum. 9/25: The Jay Azzolina quartet. 9/26: Sonido Isleno. 9/27–10/1: The Teddy Edwards Quartet. 10/2: The Sean Smith Quartet. *116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232).*

Museum of Modern Art—Fridays, in addition to throwing its doors open for pay-what-you-wish night, MOMA also transforms its cafeteria into a (sort of) swinging jazz club. All shows at 5:30. The museum's Sette restaurant offers jazz Thursdays and Saturdays, 6–10. 9/28 and 9/30: Francesca Tanksley Trio. *11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-0480).*

Red Blazer—Mondays and Tuesdays: Sam Ulano's Jazz band. Wednesdays: Felix Swing Band; Alan Russell Big Jazz Band. Thursdays: Stan Rubin's Big Swing Band. Fridays: Simon Wettenhall's Oceanic Dixieland Band. Saturdays: Bob Cantwell's Dixie & Swing Band. *32 W. 37th St. (212-947-6428).*

Rose Center—9/29: Jimmy Heath Quartet. The Rose Center is open until 8:45 P.M. Fridays; suggested admission price is $10 for adults, $7.50 for students and seniors, $6 for children. *Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th St., American Museum of Natural History (212-874-3929).*

Small's—Extremely cozy and open all night, offering after-hours jazz until 8 A.M. It's a candlelit basement whose nightly jams start round about 2 A.M.—the perfect time for a post–Village Vanguard visit (it's right around the corner)—and often involve free beverages and food. *183 W. 10th St. (212-929-7565). $.*

Sweet Basil—An intimate downtown restaurant with good food and high-profile jazz acts. Every Saturday, jazz brunch with Ilhan Ersahin. Sundays, Chuck Folds hosts "the original jazz brunch." Every Monday, it's the Spirit of Life Ensemble. Sets at 9 and 11, with extra sets Fri. and Sat. at 12:30 A.M. 9/26–10/1: Dewey Redman Quartet. *88 Seventh Ave. So., at Bleecker St. (212-242-1785).*

Tonic—Yet another impeccably hip Lower East Side avant-jazzerie, Tonic has its sights set on the Knitting Factory crowd. Sunday: Klezmer Sundays. 9/26: Vandermark 5. 9/27: Elliott Sharp; Roberto Zorzi; Joey Baron. 9/28: Sylvie Courvoisier; Cuong Vu; Erik Friedlander; Michael Sarin. 9/29: Michael Blake. 9/30: Oscar Noriega; Jim Black; Dave Tronzo Trio. *107 Norfolk St. (212-358-7503). $.*

Village Vanguard—Perhaps the world's greatest jazz club and certainly the most steeped in history, this dark, smoky institution is revered by fans around the world. Study the photos of jazz icons, dig the curtains Miles Davis once played to, and sneak a glance inside the kitchen, an Algonquin Round Table for the bop age. Mondays, the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra swings on. Sets at 9:30 and 11:30, with a late 1 A.M. set Fri. and Sat. 9/26–10/1: Mary Stallings. *178 Seventh Ave. So. (212-255-4037). $.*

Comedy

Boston Comedy Club—*Animal House* ambience and, most nights, comedy to match. Shows Tues.–Thurs. at 9:30; Fri. and Sat. at 8,10, and midnight. *82 W. 3rd St. (212-477-1000).*

Carolines On Broadway—In Times Square just down the street from the *Letterman* show, Carolines hosts big names and talented up-and-comers in its wide, elegant, TV-studio-like basement. $12.50–$24.50; two-drink minimum. 9/26: Hot 97's "Phat Tuesday." 9/27: "Chicks with Shticks." 9/27: "The Greg Charles Show." 9/28: "Hookin' Up With Christine Nagy." 9/28–9/30: John Witherspoon. *1626 Broadway, bet. 49th and 50th Sts. (212-757-4100).*

Comedy Cellar—A physical throwback to sixties Village coffeehouses, this is the late-night subterranean haunt of many of the city's top comics. Shows Fri. at 9 and 11; Sat. at 9, 10:45, and 12:30 A.M.; and Sun.–Thurs. at 9. Through 10/8: Colin Quinn; Greg Giraldo; Keith Robinson; Tom Papa; Godfrey; Andrew Kennedy. *117 MacDougal St. (212-254-3480).*

Comic Strip—Probably the most expertly booked club in the city, this showcase offers an eclectic mix of comedians every night of the week. *1568 Second Ave., bet. 81st and 82nd Sts. (212-861-9386).*

Dangerfield's—Founded by the respect-deprived comedian two decades ago, this Vegas-style lounge is one of the city's oldest comedy establishments. Shows Fri. at 9 and 11:15; Sat. at 8, 10:30, and 12:30 A.M.; Sun.–Thurs., continuous from 8:45. Cover is $15 Fri. and Sat. ($20 for 10:30 Sat. show), $12.50 on weeknights; no minimum. *1118 First Ave., bet. 61st and 62nd Sts. (212-593-1650).*

Gotham—A trendy comedy spot in the Flatiron district. Every Tues. and Sun., New Talent Showcase; Wednesdays with Robert Klein. Sun.–Thurs. at 8:30 with a $10 cover; Fri. and Sat. at 8:30 and 10:30 with a $15 cover. Two-drink minimum. 9/28: Comedy Salsa. 9/29–9/30: Todd Barry; Billy Burr; Kevin Flynn. *34 W. 22nd St. (212-367-9000).*

"Spin Cycle Comedy"—Comedy from Danny Cohen and Jodie Wasserman while you separate your whites and colors. Really. *King Size Laundromat, 178 Seventh Ave., at 20th St. (212-501-6016). Free.*

Stand-up New York—Robin Williams is known to drop by here unannounced to warm up for his *Letterman* appearances. Shows Sun.–Thurs. at 7 and 9; Fri. and Sat. at 8, 10, and 12:15 A.M. $12 cover. 9/29–9/30: Lisa Lampanelli; Gregory Carey; Rich Vos; Tom Cotter. *236 W. 78th St. (212-595-0850).*

Cabaret

Algonquin Hotel—The Oak Room hosts some formidable names in its cozy environs. (Early shows Tues.–Sat., late shows Fri. and Sat.) Sundays: Through 10/9, "Second International Festival of Cabaret" featuring Natalie Gamsu and Michel Hermon. Also, through 10/14: Maureen McGovern. *59 W. 44th St. (212-840-6800).*

Arci's Place—A Murray Hill–area Italian restaurant with an intimate cabaret space. Sundays at 8: Lisa Asher and Jeff Waxman. Mondays at 8: Steven Lutvak. Through 10/15: Karen Mason. *450 Park Ave. South, at 30th St. (212-532-4370).*

Cafe Carlyle—Every Monday, Woody Allen swings through the early set with Eddy Davis & His New Orleans Jazz Band at 8:45. $60. *Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600).*

Cafe Pierre—Tues.–Sat., singer-pianist Kathleen Landis celebrates her fourteenth year at The Cafe Pierre with a special program called "Fascinating Rhythms: 50 Years of American Popular Song and Jazz." Sun. and Mon., Nancy Winston sings and plays piano. $19 minimum; jacket and tie required. *Fifth Ave. at 61st St. (212-940-8195).*

The Carnegie Club at Carnegie Bar and Books—Friday and Saturdays at 9:30 and 11: Sinatra impersonato Cary Hoffman, backed by Stan Rubin's eleven-piece big band. $20 cover; two-drink minimum *156 W. 56th St. (212-957-9676).*

Don't Tell Mama—What better way to wind dow after an evening of overwrought Broadway far than some understated cabaret? 9/29: "The Nex Big Broadway Musical." 9/30: Celebrity impersonator Tommy Femia presents "Judy Garlan Live: That's Entertainment!" *343 W. 46th St. (212 757-0788).*

Feinstein's at the Regency—Michael Feinstein' cabaret space at the Regency Hotel shares th room with the restaurant 540 Park. Tickets ar $60; $50 food-and-drink minimum. *540 Par Ave., at 61st St. (212-307-4100 or 212-339 4095).*

FireBird Café—The theater district's newest post show snuggery, right next door to an overwrough Russian restaurant—steer clear of the Cossack dagger-toting doormen and you'll be fine. Set Wed. and Thurs. at 9; Fri.–Sat. at 9 and 11. $3 cover; $15 minimum. *365 W. 46th St. (212-586 0244).*

Judy's—This cozy and friendly piano bar feature two performance spaces, a fine menu, and a week ly gig by Judy herself. 9/25: Anthony Gaglione i "Bridges"; "Leer Mondays." 9/26: Elizabet Hodes. 9/27: Cydney Halpin. 9/28: Helen Klas 9/29: Miles Philips; Ruben Ramos. 9/30: Ann Hugues; Charles Major. 10/1: Susam Baum; Lind Fields. 10/2: "Leer Mondays." *169 Eighth Ave., be 18th and 19th Sts. (212-929-5410).*

Photograph by Davis Facto

in concert

Opening Nights at the Met and Carnegie Hall

Classical Music

"A Gershwin Party"—Jack Gibbons (piano) commemorates the 102nd anniversary of the composer's birth with Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* and works by Ravel and Debussy. 9/26 at 8. *Weill Recital Hall, 154 W. 57th St. (212-247-7800); $25.*

Vladimir Feltsman (piano)—Inaugurates the college's new Steinway with Part I of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier.* 9/27 at 8. *Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. (212-496-8524); free.*

American Composers Forum—Breaks down barriers between composers, choreographers, and videomakers with a program of collaborative works. 9/27 and 9/28 at 8. *The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. (212-255-5793); $15.*

Lara St. John (violin), Peter Burns (cello)—Make their duo recital debut in a concert of works ranging from Handel to Kodály. 9/27 at 8. *Weill Recital Hall, 154 W. 57th St. (212-247-7800); $15.*

Elizabeth Rich (piano)—Follows the release of her first CD of Mozart sonatas in a series of five with an all-Mozart program. 9/28 at 8. *Weill Recital Hall, 154 W. 57th St. (212-247-7800); $15–$25.*

The Juilliard Orchestra—Begins the season with a program including Walton's violin concerto. 9/28 at 8. *Juilliard Theater, 155 W. 65th St. (212-769-7406); free tickets must be obtained at the Juilliard box office beforehand.*

New York Philharmonic—Continues its series of works by Mendelssohn with the complete music to *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* 9/28 at 8. *Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center (212-721-6500); $18–$45.*

The Orchestra of St. Luke's —Celebrates Duke Ellington in a program arranged by Luther Henderson, the composer's longtime collaborator, led by the fiery Sir Simon Rattle. 9/28 at 8. *Carnegie Hall, 881 Seventh Ave., at 57th St. (212-247-7800); $20–$78.*

"Notes From the Last Century"—British virtuosos Thomas Bowes (violin) and Eleanor Alberga (piano) perform the New York premieres of two works by Alberga in a program also featuring works by De Falla and Symanowsky. 10/1 at 8:30 and 10/4 at 8. *Weill Recital Hall, 154 W. 57th St. (212-247-7800); $20.*

The Cleveland Orchestra—Opens Carnegie Hall's 110th season with a program including Brahms's *Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat Major* performed by Maurizio Pollini. 10/3 at 7. The orchestra, led by Christoph von Dohnányi, also presents the New York premieres of Hans Werner Henze's *Requiem,* 10/4 at 8, and Magnus Lindberg's *Cantigas,* 10/5 at 8. *Carnegie Hall, 881 Seventh Ave., at 57th St. (212-247-7800); opening-night tickets, $112–$2,500, including reception. Other nights, $21–$88.*

The Brooklyn Philharmonic—Begins the New Wave Festival 2000 with the U.S. premiere of Philip Glass's *Symphony No. 5.* 10/4, 10/6, and 10/7 at 7:30. *BAM Howard Gilman Opera House, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4100); $20–$50.*

Ground Rules:

This section emphasizes classical concerts, recitals, and public outdoor performances (but only the premeditated ones), and includes the occasional jazz concert if it is held, say, in a public space. For rock concerts and club information, see "Nightlife."

Preview

Glass's Menagerie

Performing a work by Philip Glass takes its toll on the musicians. Those endlessly repeating motifs, those thickly layered orchestrations—it all "requires an excellent sense of pace and form," says Dennis Russell Davies, who's conducting the U.S. premiere of Glass's Fifth Symphony next Wednesday at BAM. This time, at least, Glass's repetitive minimalism isn't so minimal: The Fifth is an Olympic event of a piece, with twelve movements, scored for orchestra and chorus, children's choir, and five soloists, all singing a libretto of passages taken from more than a dozen of the world's faiths. "It's music that has more to do with meditation and introspection than with Western ideas of what shapes music," says Davies. That's the sort of sentence that's a red flag to orthodox critics, who have made entire careers out of throwing stones at Glass's house. Davies, for his part, calls the new piece "a major step in Philip's development," adding that critics "have to come to terms with the fact that he's left a lasting legacy of influence in the twentieth century." Still, coming at the end of a century marked by bleak, nihilistic art—Britten's *War Requiem,* say, which intersperses the traditional Latin text with war poetry—the Fifth is exciting and forward-looking, so bright you might think it's on Prozac. Besides, says the composer himself, on the phone from London, what's a few bad reviews? This piece is for the ages, "5,000 years of meditation on eternity . . . Going from a Hindu text to a passage from the New Testament to the Koran, nothing seemed to jar at all. It reinforced my faith in the intellect and passion of human beings." Even critics. (See "Classical Music.") TARA PEPPER

Opera

The Metropolitan Opera—The season opens with *Don Giovanni.* 9/25 at 6:30. This week features the season premieres of *Samson et Dalila* with Plácido Domingo, 9/26 at 8, *Pelléas et Mélisande,* 9/27 at 8, and *Turandot,* 9/30 at 1:30. *The Metropolitan Opera, Lincoln Center (212-362-6000); opening night, $250–$1,000. Other performances $25–$250.*

New York City Opera—Donizetti's *Roberto Devereux* continues through 10/17, *La Traviata* through 11/1. The current repertory features *Madama Butterfly* and *Le Nozze di Figaro.* Tues.–Thurs. at 7:30, Fri. and Sat. at 1:30 and 8. *New York State Theater, Lincoln Center (212-870-5630); $25–$92.*

Amato Opera—Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* continues through 10/15. Fri. and Sat. at 7:30, Sun. at 2:30 and 7:30. *319 Bowery (212-228-8200); $25, $20 seniors and children under 12.*

Dance

Rennie Harris—Combines Shakespeare with rap and hip-hop dancing; original music by Darrin Jones and prerecorded samples of pop songs mixed live onstage transform the bard's tale of star-crossed love into *Rome & Jewels.* 9/26–10/1 at 8, Sunday at 7:30, weekend matinees at 2. *Joyce Theater, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. (212-242-0800); $32.*

The Birmingham Royal Ballet—Performs two contrasting programs: *Edward II,* and "Jazz Triple." Through 10/1 at 8, matinees at 3. For full program details, call the box office or log on to www.citycenter.org. *City Center, 131 W. 55th St. (212-581-1212); $30–$60.*

Jody Oberfelder—Premieres *Slay the Dragon,* choreographed for six acrobatic dancers and set to music by John Zorn and Tchaikovsky. Through 10/7, Thurs.–Sat. at 8. *The Flea Theater, 41 White St. (212-226-2407); $20, $15 students.*

hotograph by Barron Claiborne.

the mix

William T. Vollmann...Gore Vidal...Maya Lin

John Leonard's TV Notes

Clint Eastwood: Out of the Shadows (9/27; 8 to 9:30 P.M.; Channel 13) turns Dirty Harry into an "American Master," with the usual clips plus interviews with Martin Scorsese, Meryl Streep, Gene Hackman, Walter Mosely, Forest Whitaker, Eli Wallach, Rip Torn and his mother. Eastwood himself sits still long enough to come across a lot smarter than most of the movies he's acted in, or even directed.

Berlin Philharmonic Europakonzert: From Krakow (9/27; 9:30 to 11 P.M.; Channel 13) takes "Great Performances" on the road for a program of Chopin (with Emanuel Ax as soloist in the Piano Concerto No. 2), Schumann (the *Spring Symphony*), and Mozart (with soprano Christine Schafer singing the "Exsultate jubilate" cantata and "Et incarnatus est" from the C-minor Mass). All this in the superb St. Mary's Church in Krakow.

Tucker (10/2; 8:30 to 9 P.M.; NBC), the first of what will be many imitations trying to cash in on the surprise success of *Malcolm in the Middle,* asks us to care about the coming-of-age of Tucker Pierce (Eli Marienthal), whose distraught single mom (Noelle Beck) must move the two of them into the hideously tidy house of her perfectionist older sister (Katey Sagal), whose own brutish son (Nathan Lawrence) likes to wrestle when he isn't playing with his human-hair collection. But right next door is teen vamp Alison Lohman. And she's reading . . . *Lady Chatterley's Lover*! Sure she is. Bring back *The Wonder Years.*

Radio Highlights

Sydney Biddle Barrows—9/25–9/29 at 7 P.M.: The former Mayflower Madam co-hosts a new talk show, *Advice for Life,* with Mike Eagan on Jukebox Radio, 103.1 FM.

Rickie Lee Jones—9/28 from 8 to 9 P.M.: The singer's newest release, *It's Like This,* in its entirety. WFUV 90.7 FM.

Lectures and Panels

Maya Lin—9/26 at 6 P.M.: The artist discusses her work in conjunction with the opening of the exhibit "Maya Lin: Between Art and Architecture," with a reception to follow. The Great Hall of the Cooper Union, E. 7th St. at Third Ave. (212-353-4200); free.

"Inside Washington"—9/26 at 8 P.M.: David Gergen, who has served as a senior presidential adviser and an editor at *U.S. News and World Report,* talks with *Primary Colors* author Joe Klein about the current state of Washington. MSNBC political correspondent Andrea Mitchell moderates. 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (212-996-1100); $20.

Folk Healing and Saint Worship Among Moroccan Jews: The Afterlife of Rabbi Ya'aqov Wazana—9/26 at 6:30 P.M.: Professor Yoram Bilu of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem speaks about the mysterious rabbi-healer and the revival of old folk traditions, in conjunction with the new exhibition "Morocco: Jews and Art in a Muslim Land." The Jewish Museum, 1109 Fifth Ave., at 92nd St. (212-423-3224); $11.

AIA New York Chapter 2000 Design Awards—9/26 at 6:30 P.M.: A symposium hosted by the American Institute of Architects, featuring a presentation o this year's winning architectural projects and a panel discussion with moderator Reed Kroloff o *Architecture* about architectural issues and the voting process. The Lighthouse Auditorium, 111 E. 59th St. (212-683-0023, ext. 21); $10, student free, reservations required.

Jazz Talk: I Remember Clifford Brown—9/26 at 7 P.M.: A talk hosted by biographer Nick Catalano wit former Brown bandmates Teddy Edwards an Harold Land, focusing on the short but influentia career of the jazz trumpeter. Stanley H. Kapla Penthouse, Rose Building, 165 W. 65th St., tent floor (212-721-6500 for tickets); $12.

Gore Vidal in Conversation with Charlie Rose—9/28 at P.M.: The author of 22 novels, 5 plays, and mor than 200 essays talks about his latest work, *Th Golden Age,* with the Emmy-award-winning talk-show host. 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave (212-996-1100); $20.

William T. Vollmann interviewed by Leonard Lopate—10/ at 6 P.M.: The short-story writer, political journalist and author of *The Butterfly Stories, Whores for Glori* and *The Rifles* talks about his latest novel, *The Royal Family.* Room 227 at the New York Public Library's Humanities and Social Sciences branch 42nd St. and Fifth Ave. (212-930-0084); free.

The Written Word

Chris Ware—9/25 at 6 P.M.: Signing copies of hi book *Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid on Eart* along with Daniel Clowes. Virgin Megastore, 5 E. 14th St. (212-598-4666); free.

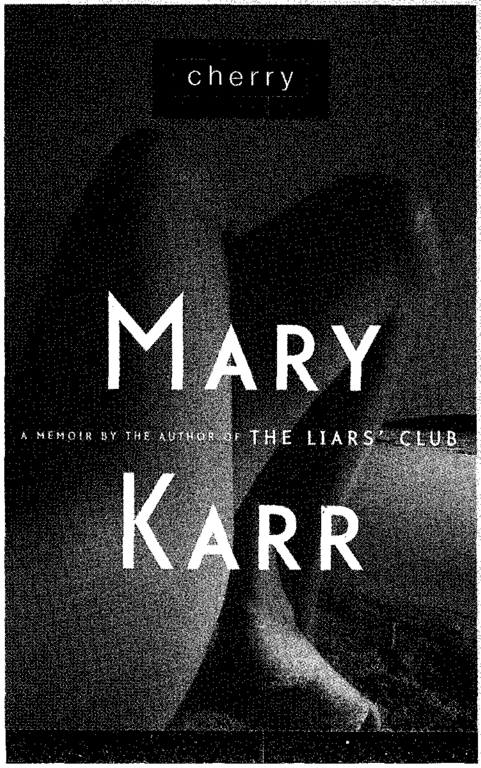
Dorianne Laux and Pablo Medina—9/25 at 7 P.M. Reading from their works as part of the Monda Night Poetry series at KGB, 85 E. 4th St. (212 505-3360); free.

Mira Kamdar—9/26 at 6:30 P.M.: Reading from he

In Print

Growing Up in Public

When Mary Karr, the "poster child for memoir," wrote her second autobiographical installment, *Cherry,* she found that she could no longer soothe herself with the idea that nobody would ever read it. "If you've written poetry in America for twenty years, you're used to hearing the 'plink' when a book hits the bottom of the well," she says, still sounding very much a Texan even as she's talking from her room at the Royalton. Of course, everyone did read her first memoir, *The Liars' Club* (1995), and promptly thereafter, everyone wrote one. But not one was a woman's sexual-coming-of-age story like *Cherry.* "There are a million books about aberrant sex—*I was gang-banged, I had sex with my father, I was raped*—but nobody deals with the regular sexual stuff that happens to girls in their adolescence," says Karr. "I think part of it is the nature of female sexuality at that age. What we want is much less linear than what boys want. The whole Lolita myth, which men find so appealing, is based on this 12-year-old girl saying, 'Fuck me till my ears bleed.' Well, that's how a 12-year-old *boy* feels! *We* were busy writing some guy's name over and over again in our notebook." As the mother of a teenage boy, Karr now has ringside seats from which to view male sexual blossoming. She also might have to deal with her child's learning the secrets of her sexual past—except that "he doesn't read what I write. He came home one day from seventh grade and told me he could read any memoir he wanted for his English class. I got all excited. Then he said, 'I think I'll read *This Boy's Life.*' " Karr will be reading at Barnes & Noble Union Square on September 26 at 7:30 P.M. **ARIEL LEVY**



new book, *Motiba's Tattoos: A Granddaughter's Journey Into Her Indian Family's Past.* Dialectica Gallery, 415 W. Broadway, fifth floor (212-288-6400); free.

A Salute to the Giller Prize—9/26 at 7 P.M.: Mordechai Richler hosts an evening of readings by Gail Anderson-Dargatz, Bonnie Burnard, Wayne Johnston, and Anne Michaels. The Americas Society, 680 Park Ave., at 68th St. (212-249-8950, ext. 369); $5, $3 students and seniors, reservations recommended.

Mary Jo Bang, Rick Moody, Megan Ratner, and Suzanne Wise—9/26 at 7 P.M.: Reading from their new works as part of the "Two x Two" series showcasing authors and poets who have been published by Pierogi Press. Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris, 120 Park Ave., at 42nd St. (917-663-2453); free.

Evan Cornog and Richard Whelan—9/28 at 6:30 P.M.: The authors of *Hats in the Ring: An Illustrated History of American Presidential Campaigns* discuss their work at Posman Books, One University Place (212-533-2665); free.

Regis Philbin—9/28 at 12:30 P.M.: Signing and reading from his new book, *Who Wants to Be Me,* at Barnes & Noble, 600 Fifth Ave., at 48th St. (212-765-0590); free.

A Poet's Tribute to Robert Lowell—10/2 at 8 P.M.: A reading of the poet's works, with Robert Pinsky, Derek Walcott, Seamus Heaney, Frank Bidart, Heather McHugh, and David Gewanter. 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (212-996-1100); $15.

Tours

'Merchants, Mayors, and Magnificence: Manhattan's Civic Center'—9/29 at 1 P.M.: A look at one of the country's most impressive groups of official buildings, including City Hall, Surrogate's Court, and the Municipal Building. Meet with urban historian Joseph Svehlak at St. Paul's Chapel, Broadway between Fulton and Vesey Sts. (212-935-3960); $10.

Chelsea, the Flatiron, and the Hudson River at Twilight—9/30 at 5 P.M.: Stops include the Chelsea Hotel, the Flatiron Building, and the Clement Clarke Moore Estate. Call for reservations and meeting place (212-465-3331); $12.

Old & New Money: The Origins of Central Park West & Fifth Avenue—9/30 at 2 P.M. and 10/1 at 1:30 P.M.: Investigate how history has shaped the neighborhood, with stops including the Harry Sinclair and Henry Clay Frick mansions, the Dakota, and the Prasada. Call for reservations and meeting place (212-465-3331); $12.

'Joe Sent Me"—An Historic Speakeasy Tour—9/30 at 6 P.M.: Venture behind the once-locked doors of three former speakeasies in SoHo and Greenwich Village, and learn about New York's notorious nineteenth-century red-light district. Meet in front of Dean & DeLuca on the southeast corner of Prince St. and Broadway (212-969-8262); $10.

ity & Suburban Homes Tour—10/1 at 1 P.M.: A walking tour focusing on urban housing with stops including Shively Sanitary Tenements, P.S. 158, and a former East Side settlement house with an accompanying slide show and photo exhibit. Meet at the City & Suburban Homes Archives Room, 515 E. 78th St., lower level (212-388-0883); free.

Millionaires' Mile—10/1 at 2 P.M.: A walking tour focusing on the architecture and history of the Upper East Side neighborhood, with stops including The Plaza Hotel, the Pulitzer Fountain, and the best remaining example of the Fifth Avenue architectural style. Meet at the northwest corner of W. 58th St. and Fifth Ave. (212-979-2388); $10.

Benefits

The 15th Anniversary Great Sports Legends Dinner—9/26 at 6:30 P.M.: A benefit dinner saluting several athletes, including Charles Barkley, Dan Marino, and Michael Jordan, for their legendary achievements in sports, with all proceeds to benefit the Miami Project to Cure Paralysis (212-245-6570); tickets $600–$1,200, tables $6,000–$25,000.

The Luxury of Simplicity—9/28 at 7:30 P.M.: a cocktail reception and auction of goods donated by Vera Wang, Kate Spade, Carolina Herrera, and others to benefit SHARE and Saint Vincent's Comprehensive Breast Center's Community Medicine Department. Tribeca Rooftop, 2 Desbrosses St., twelfth floor. (212-786-9368); $100, VIP tickets (include VIP reception and auction preview) $250–$1,000.

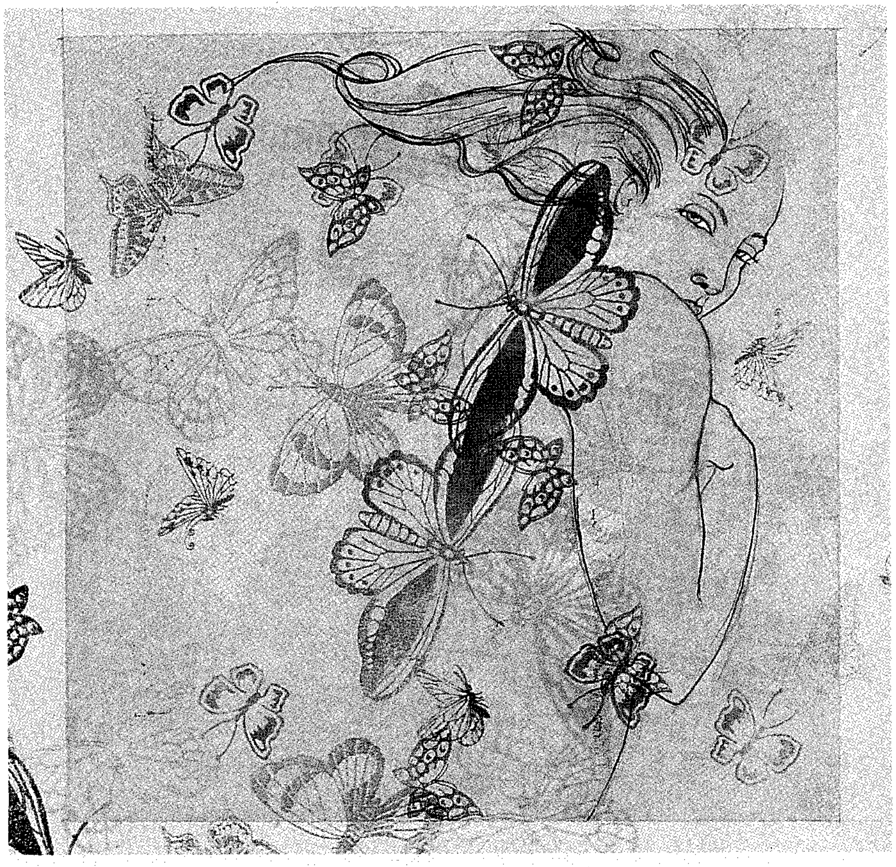
"Tomorrow Is Tonight" Dinner and Auction—10/2 at 7 P.M.: A celebrity-packed evening with hosts Matthew Broderick, Katie Couric, and Sarah Jessica Parker to benefit Project A.L.S., a nonprofit organization geared toward raising awareness and funding for Lou Gehrig's disease. The Metropolitan Pavilion, 125 W. 18th St. (212-560-7278); tickets begin at $500.

Exhibitions

Eyewitness 2000—Through 10/9 from 9:30 A.M. to 10 P.M.: The World Press Photo Foundation chooses that year's best press photographs from a huge selection of entries from 122 countries. An exhibit of the winning news photos from 1999 kicks off its worldwide tour with this exhibition at Manhattan's World Financial Center. The North Bridge Gallery, bet. Liberty and Vesey Sts. (212-945-0505); free.

"Brooklyn Pops Up! The History and Art of the Movable Book"—Through 12/30, Mon.–Thurs. 9 A.M.–8 P.M., Fri. till 6 P.M., Sat. till 5 P.M., Sun. 1–5 P.M. A large-scale display highlighting more than 100 books that illustrate some four centuries of innovation in bookmaking. Highlights include famous story illustrations, interactive displays, and special presentations like "The Making of Movable Books." The Central Library, Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn (718-230-2100); free.

Inventing the Skyline: The Architecture of Cass Gilbert—Through 1/21 from 11 A.M. to 6 P.M.: The New-York Historical Society hosts an exhibit exploring



On View From September 25 through 29, "The Turning Page," an exhibition of visual essays in book form, explores themes from blindness to homeland to beauty (as in Dan Halm's look at butterflies and women, pictured above). At the American Institute of Graphic Arts, 164 Fifth Avenue, near 21st Street (212-592-2010), in conjunction with the exhibition "50 Books/50 Covers."

GAME WEEK

HOME ▨ AWAY ▨

	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
GIANTS							TEN FOX 1 P.M.
ETS							BYE WEEK
YANKEES	DET MSG 7:05 P.M.	TAM MSG 7:15 P.M.	TAM MSG 7:15 P.M.	TAM MSG 7:15 P.M.	BAL MSG 7:05 P.M.	BAL MSG 7:05 P.M.	BAL MSG 1:35 P.M.
METS		ATL FSNY 7:10 P.M.	ATL FSNY 7:10 P.M.	ATL FSNY 7:10 P.M.	MON FSNY 7:10 P.M.	MON FSNY 7:10 P.M.	MON FSNY 1:10 P.M.
METROSTARS						PLAYOFFS TBA	
	9/25	9/26	9/27	9/28	9/29	9/30	10/1

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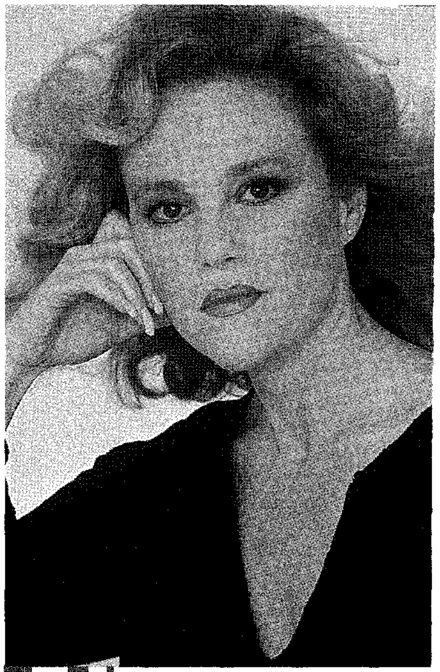

Photograph courtesy of Lifetime Televisio

The Tube

Sweet Mystery of Life

"Intimate Portrait: Madeline Kahn" (October 2; 7 to 8 P.M.; Lifetime), narrated by Teri Garr, makes us feel sad all over again at the premature death of the Tony, Emmy, and Oscar winner who stole the various hearts of Peter Bogdanovich, Mel Brooks, Wendy Wasserstein, and, obviously, Lee Grant, who directs this better-than-average entry in the usually lightweight series. That Kahn and Gilda Radner were pals just makes it worse.

the work of American architect Cass Gilbert, designer of the U.S. Custom House at Bowlin Green, the Woolworth Building, and the U.S Army Supply Base in Brooklyn. Items on displa range from conceptual sketches to complete blueprints, and an accompanying catalogue wi also be available. The New-York Historical Society, 2 W. 77th St. (212-873-3400); suggested donation of $5, $3 students and seniors.

Sports

New York City Marathon Countdown Clinic—9/27 6:30–8:30 P.M.: There's little over a month remaining to get ready for the big one; join coaches and co-directors of the New York Road Runners Club running classes to get advice on everything from speed work to carbo-loading to menta preparation and strategy. At the Robert Wagner Middle School, 220 E. 76th St. Nonmembers $5 no preregistration. There'll be refreshments from to 6:30 P.M. Call the NYRRC at 212-860-445 or visit www.nyrrc.org for more information.

Heavyweight Explosion—9/28 at 7:30 P.M.: The late edition of this monthly heavyweight series at th Hammerstein Ballroom (311 W. 34th St.). Card t be announced: Visit www.ckpboxing.com f schedule. Tickets $25–$125; call 212-564-4882 o 212-307-7171 for tickets and information.

kids

Ground Rules:

● = free

● = now or never (one-shot deal or final week)

Hip-Hop...Apple Picking

Children's Events

It's Not Easy Being Green—Hunter College presents ***BOONAH, COME DOWN***, a Japanese play about a tree-climbing frog who learns to appreciate his life on the ground (see photo). The production runs from 9/29 to 10/5, Tues.–Fri. at 7 P.M., Sat.–Sun. at 3 P.M. Tickets are $40, or $15 for students, and can be purchased by calling 212-772-4448. At the Kaye Playhouse, 68th St. bet. Park and Lexington Aves.

Lunch Time—Learn everything there is to know about school lunch. Sponsored by the **N.Y. FOOD MUSEUM**, the display is set up in the Staten Island Ferry terminal and runs through the end of October. For information, call 212-966-0191.●

Lollypop Playhouse—Live actors, audience participation, and no mean stepparents or negative stereotypes at Miss Majesty's Lollypop Playhouse in the Village. Every Saturday and Sunday, now through Nov. 19, is ***THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD*** at 1:30 P.M. and ***THE LITTLEST MERMAID*** at 3:30 P.M. Tickets are $8.50. Call 212-741-6436 for reservations. At 39 Grove St.

Gingerbread Kids—Adapted into a gentler version for the marionette stage, **"HANSEL & GRETEL"** will be performed by Puppetworks at its Park Slope theater. The production includes several folk songs from the operatic version. Performances are Saturdays and Sundays at 12:30 and 2:30 P.M., through 12/17. Additional shows on Columbus Day, 10/9. Tickets are $7, $6 for kids. At 338 Sixth Ave., in Brooklyn. Call 718-965-3391 for reservations.

The Little Mermaid—In addition to the 50-minute musical, the audience can take part in building the set in a hands-on workshop before the show. Kids will also become familiar with the musical numbers in advance. Saturdays and Sundays, from 10/13 through 12/30. Tickets are $15 each. The pre-show workshop is an additional $5. At the Hitchcock-Rockefeller Auditorium, 610 Lexington Ave., at 53rd St. (212-866-5170).

Use Your Head—Kids are reminded how to be creative in ***IMAGINATION***, a play featuring a character by the same name, who teaches four children suffering from there's-nothing-on-television boredom how to entertain themselves. The show runs Saturdays and Sundays at 2 and 4 P.M. and closes on 10/8. Tickets are $10 for adults, $8 for children. At the Looking Glass Theatre, 422 W. 57th St. For tickets, call 212-307-9467.●

Fido Fashions—What child hasn't giggled over dressing his or her pet in human clothing? William Wegman thinks it's fun, too: Kids can view his photo exhibit of dogs dressed as people before creating their own animal masks (for themselves, not their pets), using feathers, fabric, paper, and paint. Participants of **ST. FRANCIS DAY MASK-MAKING AND PHOTO PORTRAITS** will take home Polaroid portraits of themselves wearing the masks they create. 9/30 from 10 A.M. to noon; tickets cost $5. At the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, 112th St. at Amsterdam Ave. For reservations, call 212-932-7347.●

Kid Rock—If your children kept you up watching the Video Music Awards, then you may already know more than you ever wanted to know about hip-hop. But chances are, your kids can't get enough. A new exhibit, **"FROM HIP TO HIP-HOP: ROOTS, RHYMES, AND RAGE,"** examines the impact of hip-hop culture on video, graffiti art, and fashion over the past two decades. The exhibit runs from 9/22 to 12/31 at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, 200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn. The museum is open from 10 A.M. to 5 P.M. Wed.–Fri., and from 11 A.M. to 6 P.M. Sat.–Sun. Admission is $4 for adults, $2 for students and seniors, free to those under 12. For further information, call 718-638-5000.

Baby Steps—Dancing for kids, by kids! Dance Theater Workshop presents **DANCES BY VERY YOUNG CHOREOGRAPHERS**, short works choreographed and performed by youngsters ages 7–16, 10/1 at 3 P.M. Tickets are $12 for adults, $8 for children. At the Dance Theater Workshop's Bessie Schönberg Theater, 219 W. 19th St. Advance tickets can be purchased by calling 212-924-0077.●

An Apple a Day—Candy apples, apple pie, apple crisp—even if you can't cook, **APPLE PICKING** is a barrel of fun. Through Oct. 15, visitors can pick a variety of Hudson Valley apples, as well as pears and raspberries. Those who prefer chewing to plucking can purchase already-picked fruit (plus preserves, pumpkins, and fresh cider) at the on-site farm stand. At the Montgomery Place Orchard in Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y. For details and directions, call 845-758-6338.

Onstage
Buddhism for Beginners

Eastern Buddhists may not be going out of their way to foster their religion's appeal to Hollywood trend-surfers. But even if they are, it's unlikely that producer Kazuto Ohira is bringing the Japanese fable *Boonah, Come Down* to the New York stage with the hopes of recruiting more Richard Geres and Madonnas. Rather, Ohira believes now is the perfect time to introduce the show to New York because "levels of greed and materialism are very high. People need to be reminded of the things that truly matter." *Boonah,* which has been teaching the principles of Buddhism to the children of Japan, China, and Russia for the past twenty years, makes its American debut this Friday at Hunter College's Kaye Playhouse. The tale of a fearful frog who climbs a tree to escape his difficult earthly life was written by Tsutomu Mizukami, a former Buddhist monk, to remind children (as well as adults) that one's life is connected with the lives of others, that all people should help one another regardless of their place in society, and that every individual should strive for a life of simplicity. The show conveys these spiritual messages—goofily, though convincingly—through lively song, dance, and dialogue, in Japanese with real-time translation available through headsets. The popularity of animal stories like *The Lion King* has given Ohira confidence in the play's overseas potential: "The subject matter touches everyone. It will even touch New Yorkers." (Through October 5; see "Children's Events.")

TARA MANDY

otograph by Yoshiki Mano.

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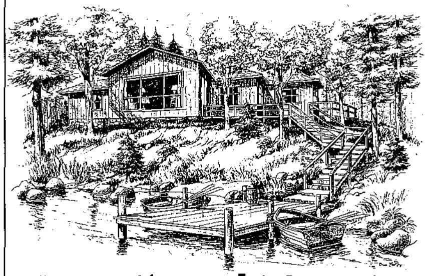

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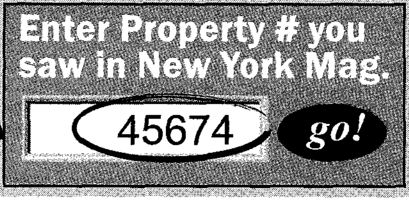
how to power up your apartment search

1. Find the Property ID on the right top from print ad.

Central Park South **ID#45674**
1 BR, 1 BT, post war clean elv bldg
Fantastic view! 24 dmn, jacuzzi,
mbl ktn & bt, huge balcony, details,
garage, pets OK, Financing 75%

2. Log onto www.nymag.mlx.com and type in the Property ID. Click on the Go! button on the right.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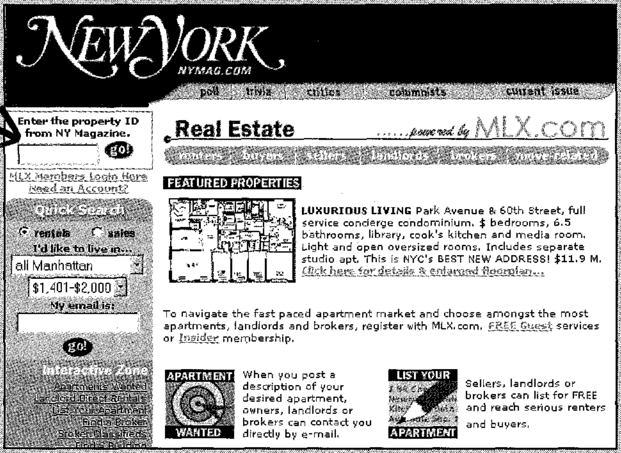
45674
go!

3. Online ad will come up with full available details and contact's profile.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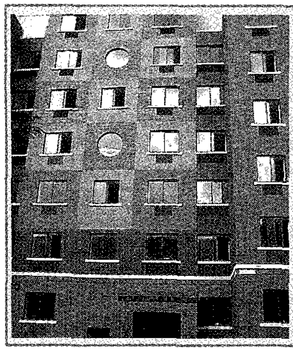

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upper west side

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Hi ceilings, approx. 1000 SF!

E. 50 Sutton Vic 2br/2bth............$3400
Lux DM Mint Cond Hi Fl-Vus

E. 60s: 3br/3bth/terrace..............$7350

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village

Property ID 2451

NOHO PENTHOUSE LOFT

1200 sqft, hardwood fls, hi ceilings, brand new renovation, N, W, S exposures, open city view, sunny, newly renovated kitchen W/D **Charles Laboz**

William B. May 962-6293 x103

Property ID 2450

AMAZING OPEN LOFT, DUPLEX

Greenwich Village Conv. Warehouse

Elev, Hi Ceil, Juliette balc, open kit

All renovated **Price : $3300**

BENJAMIN JAMES, Phil 777-7300

Property ID 2366

GV/Christopher St. *Pre-war Loft*

Huge 1BR, sep kit, DW, sep kit, oak flr expo brick, pre-war detail, elev, laundry

$3196, Knickerbocker Village 377-5757

below houston

Property ID 2461

NOLITA/SOHO LOFT $4800

Live/Work, lots of windows, sunflooded, open loft space with hi ceilings

Approx. 1800 Sqft

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Property ID 2456

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Rarely avail. 4500 sqft. corner bldg, live work. Configured as triplex w/1200 sqft terr, owner will build two more floors for right client. Possible store front access. $30,000 per month. **Eric Slater**

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Property ID 2454

2 HUGE TRIBECA LOFT

All new renovation, Hi tech kitchen, marble baths, hi ceilings, W/D in the apt, central A/C, open city views, very bright corner apartment, ky to elevator.

price: $5750 Charles Laboz

WILLIAM B. MAY 962-6293 x103

Property ID 2367

Soho/Spring St. *Pre-war Loft*

Huge loft, org details, hi ceiling, oak flr S/N expos, huge wndws, Calif kit, Sunny

$5500,Knickerbocker Village, 377-5757

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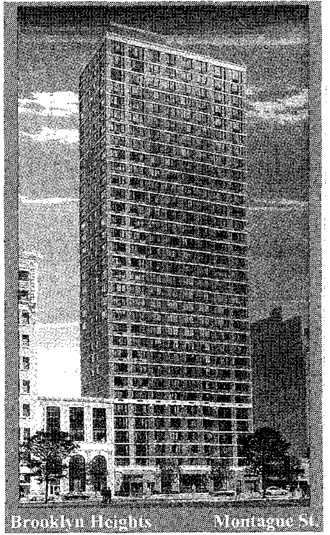

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...sales

upper west side

Property ID 2432

395 Riverside Drive Apartment 8G

2 BR, excellent cond., full reno. New gourmet EIK. 1 bath, reno. P/W detail. N/exp. w/river vus. MT 30% TD. 1100 sf No brd appr. sponsor apt. $499K

The McIntosh Company

Sharon McIntosh 580-8855

Property ID 2445

60's/ West Lincoln Center Area

THE ALFRED

2 BRS/2BTHS/2 TERRACES

Condo STUNNING 2 BRS/2BTHS/ 2 TERRACES Triple mint cond., Dining area, approx 1200sqft S,E,W expo., W/D, Incl. H/C, Pool, Squash CT. Price: $799K

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Property ID 2460

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Corcoran, Marianne Bye 875-2998

Property ID 2441

395 Riverside Drive, Apt.# 1FG

3 BR, excellent cond., full reno. New gourmet EIK. 2 bath, reno. P/W detail. Laundry room, MT 30% TD. 3 MBR + maids rm/den/office. Ask:$1.025M

McIntosh Company , Sharon 580-8855

Corcoran , Victoria 836-1086 x508

upper east side

Property ID 2434

67th/East Spacious Sleeping Alcove

South expo. quiet, very sunny

4 generous closets **Heloisa Gilbert**

Mathew Adam Prop 699-8927

Property ID 2304

70s E

SUNNY, BRITE, 1 BR, grt cond. Lux Drmn, rf deck, $399k. **Danny Anitian**

Manhattan Apts 378-2336

Property ID 2437

70s 5th Ave Reno Dupelx P/W Drmn

Rarely avail. elegant family apt. 4 BR + maid"s r, 5.5 marble bth, dbl size LR, FDR, fmly rm, state of art kit., W/D, hi ceil, moldings, new windows.

Asking $3.8M **Vanessa Kaufman**

Andrew Emmet & Co 570-6000 x10

Property ID 2439

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midtown

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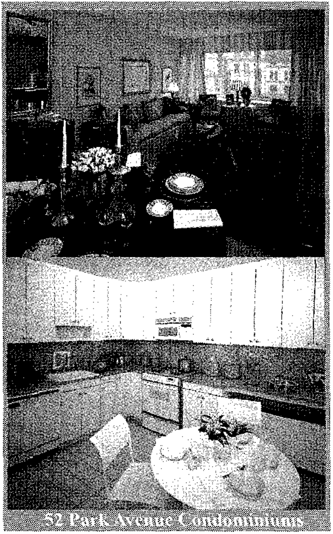

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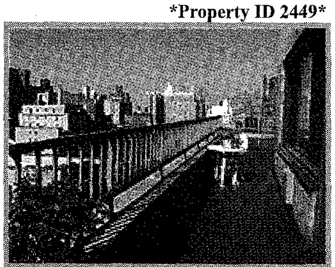

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38th St./ East TRIPLE MINT JR 4

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Asking:$ 595K **Elan B.**

Prudential MLBKaye 259-0455

Property ID 2360

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J. Lamb, Broker 779-6000 x202

Property ID 2315

48th/145 East #16A Cosmopolitan

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Interbelmont, Ben H. 212-319-7919

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54th St./Third Ave Lux Drmn Bldg

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Mathew Adam Prop. 699-8925

Property ID 2436

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Approx 900sqft, open LR, windowed kit+bath, Fab closets space, brite

Price: $359K **Heloisa G.**

Mathew Adam Prop. 699-8927

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Chelsea/17th St

1 Bedroom Condo/Drmn

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village

Property ID 2438

55 E. 9th St. The Jefferson

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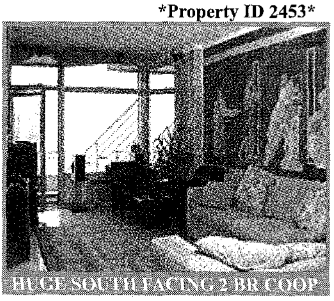

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below houston

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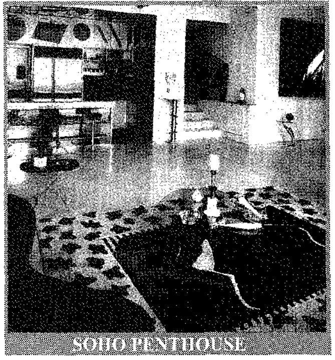

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Manhattan Landmark 290-8488 x105

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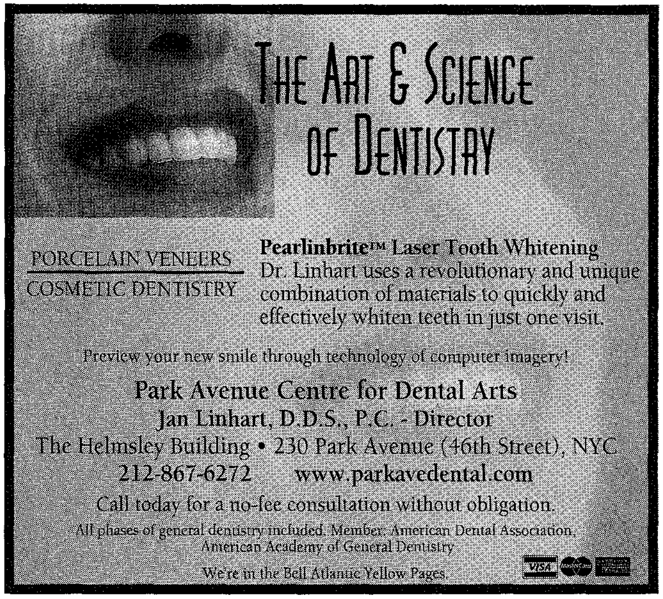
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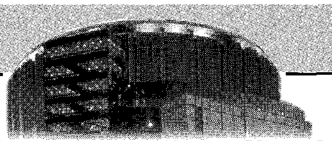

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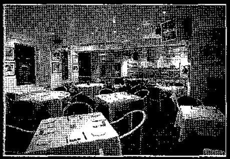

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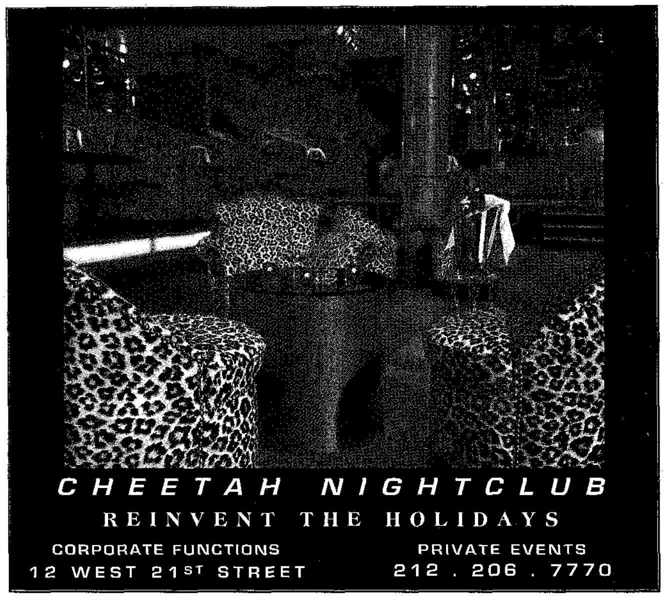
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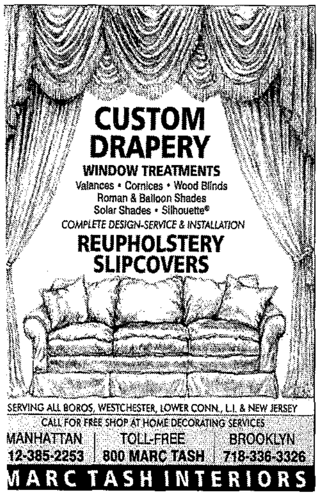
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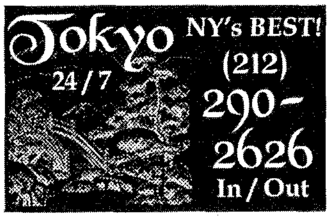

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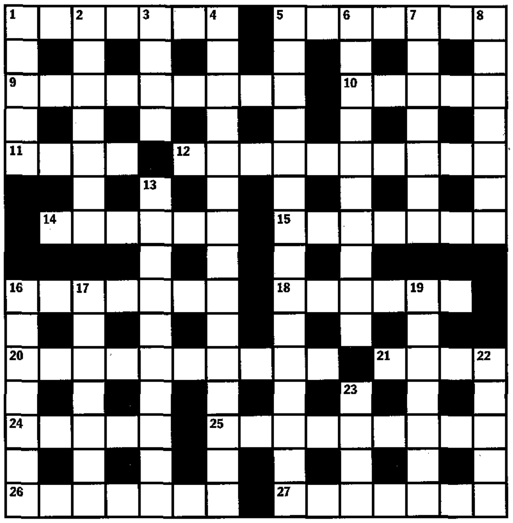
The 'Guardian' Crossword

ACROSS

1 Politician wants artillery in case of defamation. (7)
5 Model upset with fungus. (7)
9 Unorthodox priest and curate haven't swallowed religious text. (9)
10 Passing by chocolate? (5)
11 Raise tail. (4)
12 Partied when famous. (10)
14 "Psycho: Return of Murderer (Second Degree)." (6)
15 Back, say, to dye in the valley of death. (7)
16 "A Square Polo Round" (emphasised musically). (7)
18 Remains of cold sauce passed round (not hot). (6)
20 Rival of the firm favourite, with German about to take gold. (10)
21 God of War, essentially. (4)
24 Ace in red cards. (5)
25 Constant turning over turns to inertia. (9)
26 Poet and writer on board ship, the QE2. (7)
27 Great with red kings and a plant. (7)



DOWN

1 One's not one, one hears? (5)
2 See 22.
3 Packaged, say, and sent. (4)
4 With, say, D.H. or T.E. and Hardy, one brought in a noted thespian. (8,7)
5 Poor man's work transferring herpe to garbage. (3,7,5)
6 Disappoint when led astray with rum. (10)
7 Knock down even number. (7)
8 Beast chained is whipped. (7)
13 Cause of cancer? Paul taking headless illusion up. (10)
16 Paul's church set about producing fungi. (7)
17 Regret seeing Her Majesty turn up a bit short of cash. (7)
19 Pleasant drink. (7)
22,2 Bush bearing gifts in California? (5,7)
23 Lower part of leg. (4)

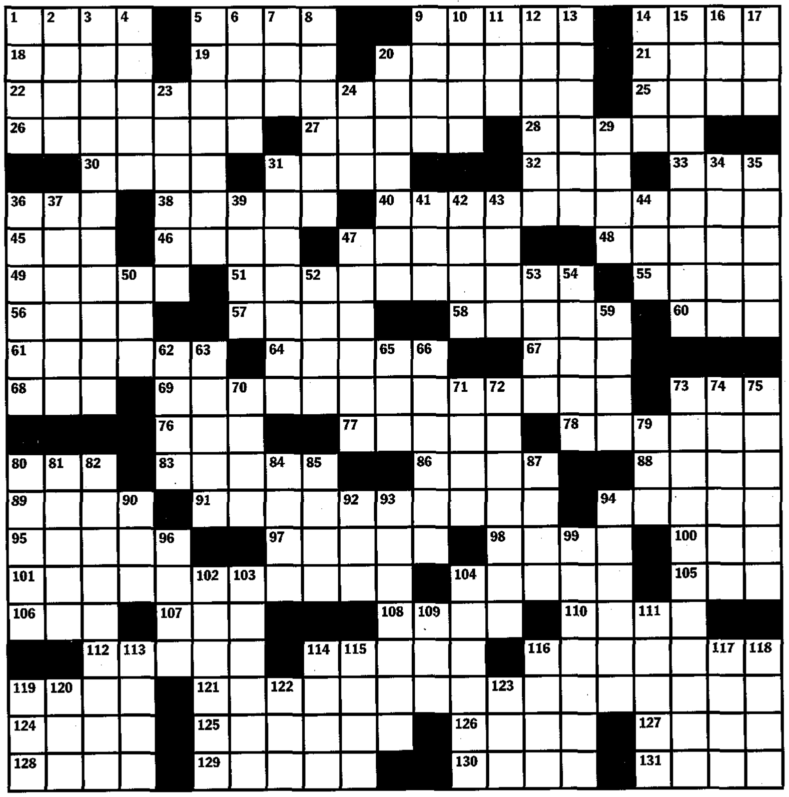
'Libra Birthdays': 'Cue' Crossword • By Maura B. Jacobson

ACROSS

1 Bullets, familiarly
5 Practice boxing
9 Bundle of grain
14 N.Y.S.E. competitor
18 Cordelia's father
19 Fork feature
20 —— d'hotel (headwaiter)
21 Godiva's title
22 Prime Minister, 10/13
25 From —— (all-inclusive)
26 Acid neutralizers
27 Positive replies
28 Baker's fermenting substance
30 Between L and Q
31 Risky investing, for short
32 Light-switch positions
33 River of Scotland
36 Killer whale
38 Therefore
40 Journalist, 10/20
45 Excavate
46 Wife of Esau
47 Scent
48 Architect noted for chair styles
49 Daybreaks
51 Designer, 10/2
55 Over with
56 Nobel-winner Wiesel, 9/30
57 Brewery products
58 Kind of drip
60 Zilch
61 Emphasis
64 Engaged in hostilities
67 Rival of S.M.U.
68 Ballerina's pivot
69 Explorer, 10/6
73 Cider receptacle
76 Comic-strip shriek
77 Make a double knot
78 Rather antiquated
80 Toward the stern
83 Kin of a sarong
86 "Casablanca" heroine
88 Melville tale
89 Adjective for a pittance
91 Pianist, 9/23
94 Office subs
95 Mental flashes
97 Beethoven dedicatee
98 Upswing
100 "The best is —— to come"
101 Novelist, 10/16
104 Governor's domain
105 Body's neural network: abbr.
106 Choose
107 W. side of the Urals
108 Frosts the cake
110 Vulcan's volcano
112 Under-the-pole dance
114 Fibber of radio days
116 Administer an oath
119 Berserk
121 Tenor, 10/12
124 Be overfond, with "on"
125 Élèves' schools
126 Penultimate fairy-tale word
127 Convene
128 Sixth Greek letter
129 Luster
130 Car scar
131 "The Joy of Cooking" writer Rombauer

DOWN

1 —— Mater
2 More than a snack
3 Baseballer, 10/1
4 Choir accompaniment
5 Marked like a zebra
6 Slapstick missiles
7 Picnic pest
8 Do over on a word processor
9 Fully gratify
10 Sounds from souses
11 Biblical verb ending
12 "—— a man or a mouse?"
13 Hungarian author Molnár
14 Woe is me!
15 Actor, 10/8
16 Tokyo's former name
17 —— Affair (1797 U.S.-France incident)
20 Eyelash cosmetic
23 Hawaiian howdies
24 Half a bray
29 Winner of the first 74-Down
31 Serious student
34 Nicholas Gage's mother, in a 1983 best-seller
35 Ford flop
36 Most peculiar
37 Theater district
39 It means nothing to Juan
41 Korean G.I.
42 Fed. agent
43 Screen vamp Theda
44 Bankroll
47 Write back
50 Maiden-named
52 Holl.
53 "Thin Man" pooch
54 Mexican munchie
59 Calm before the stor
62 Big first for baby
63 Shave a sheep
65 All in favor say it
66 Head for bed
70 Gumbo ingredient
71 Brooklet
72 Leaves in the lurch
73 President, 10/1
74 Last of tennis's annua Grand Slams
75 Scrooge's visitors
79 Anonymous John
80 Barcelona buddy
81 Unwilling to endure any more
82 Senator, 10/9
84 Ogler
85 Pacific Ten coll.
87 East side of the Urals
90 Wolf down
92 "To each —— own"
93 Allocates, as homework
94 Partner of totter
96 Give the impression being
99 Martha or Rod
102 Moscow money
103 Sourpuss
104 Osmosed
109 Corp. bigwig
111 Mama Judd
113 Swedish furniture company
114 Odometer unit
115 Normandy city
116 Oscar-winning cinematographer Nykvist
117 Columnist's tidbit
118 Naldi of the silents
119 Axlike tool
120 One of the Stooges
122 Runner Sebastian, 9/
123 "—— Maria"



Solutions to last week's puzzles appear on page 1

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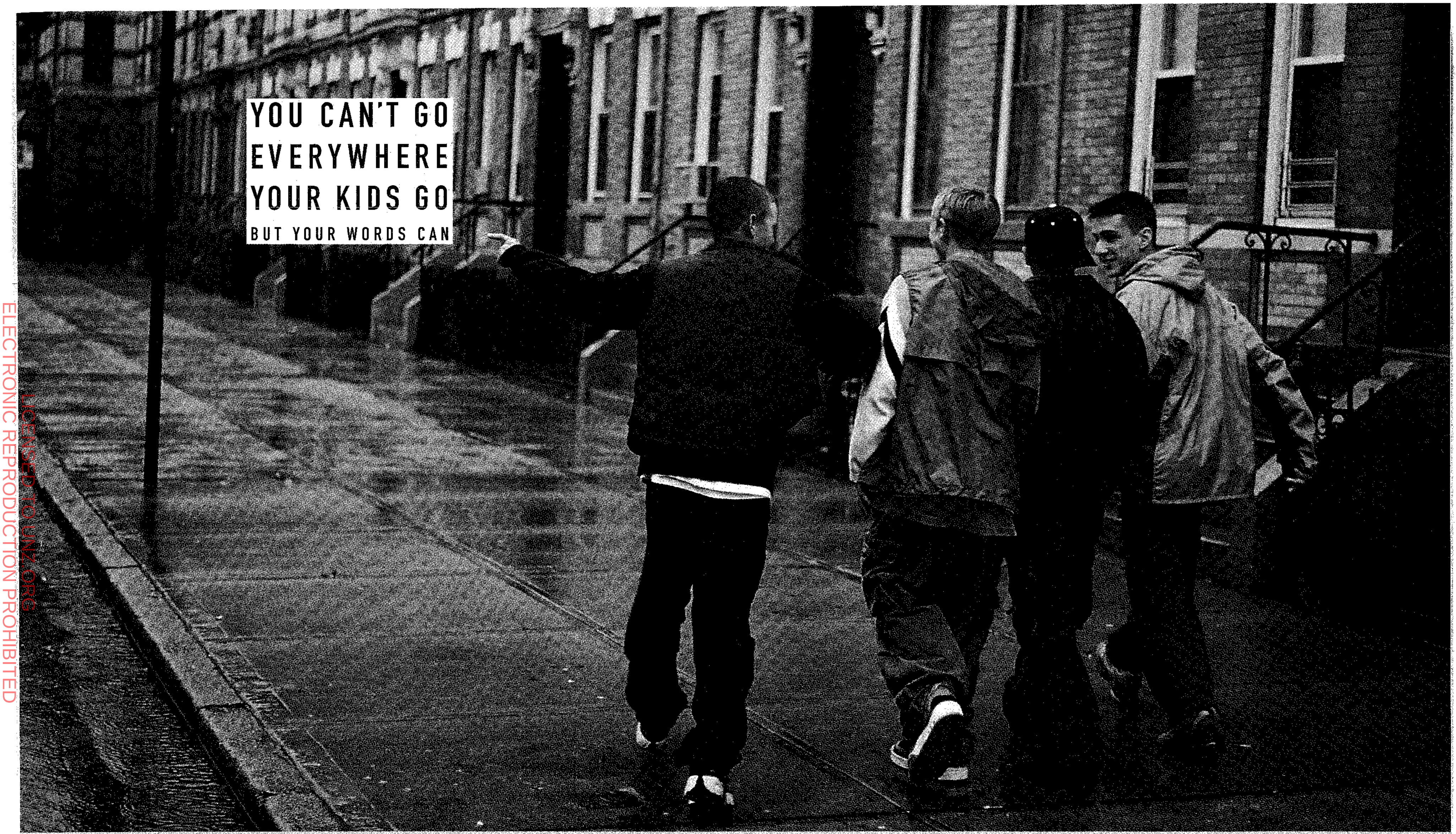

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